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**THE TREATISE  
TO THEOPHILUS**

**VOL. I.**



*Robt. M. Luke, English*

# THE TREATISE TO THEOPHILUS

NOTES ON  
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE

VOLUME ONE

BY

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*Note.*—The text used is that of the Revised Version; except where its marginal readings have been adopted, and a few minor changes made to suit the paragraphing.

The numbers denoting the verses are all numerical, and inclusive.





**PART I.**  
**THE TEXT**  
**ST. LUKE I. 1.—VII. 50.**



## CHAPTER A.

ST. LUKE I. 1.—IV. 13.

(a). i. 1-4. (b). i. 5.—iii. 22. (c). iii. 23.—iv. 13.

(a.)

i. 1-4. Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed.

(b.) 1.

5-25. There was in the days of Herod, king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah: and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they were now well stricken in years.

Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John; and thou shalt have

joy and gladness. And many shall rejoice at his birth, for he shall be great in the sight of the Lord; and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb; and many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.

And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee these good tidings. And behold, thou shalt be silent and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall come to pass, because thou believedst not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and they marvelled while he tarried in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: and he continued making signs unto them, and remained dumb.

And it came to pass, when the days of his ministration were fulfilled; he departed unto his house. And after these days Elisabeth his wife conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord done unto me in the days wherein he looked upon me, to take away my reproach among men.

## 2.

26-38. Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary.

And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee. But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be.

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He

shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elisabeth thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren. For no word from God shall be void of power. And Mary said, Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.

And the angel departed from her.

### 3.

39-56. And Mary arose in these days and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb.

And Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; and she lifted up her voice with a loud cry, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me? For behold, when the voice of thy salutation came into mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord.

And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is unto generations and generations on them that fear him. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart. He hath put down princes from their thrones, and hath exalted them of low degree. The hungry he hath filled with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen

Israel his servant, that he might remember mercy (as he spake unto our fathers) toward Abraham and his seed for ever.

And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned unto her house.

## 4.

57-66. Now Elisabeth's time was fulfilled that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her kinsfolk heard that the Lord had magnified his mercy towards her; and they rejoiced with her.

And it came to pass on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, blessing God.

And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judæa. And all that heard them laid them up in their heart, saying, What then shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him.

## 5.

67-80. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began);

Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

To show mercy towards our fathers,  
And to remember his holy covenant;

The oath which he sware unto Abraham our father, to grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies should

serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

Yea and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways;

To give knowledge of salvation unto his people in the remission of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God,

Whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us, to shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death;

To guide our feet into the way of peace.

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

## 6.

ii. 1-20. Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to enrol themselves, every one to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child. And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you; Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into



heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child.

And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

7.

21. And when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising him, his name was called Jesus, which was so called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

8.

22-38. And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord), and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem; whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law, then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

And his father and his mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning him; and Simeon blessed them, and

said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, and she had been a widow even for fourscore and four years), which departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

## 9.

39-51. And when they had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him. And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were astonished: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them.

And his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

## 10.

ii. 52.—iii. 22. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituræa and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

And he came into all the region round about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: The voice of one crying in the wilderness,

Make ye ready the way of the Lord:

Make his paths straight: every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall become straight; and the rough ways smooth:

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

He said therefore to the multitudes that went out to be baptized of him,

Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance. And begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And even now is the axe also laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do? And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise. And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Teacher, what must we do? And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you. And soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither exact anything wrongfully; and be content with your wages.

And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ;

John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose.

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

With many other exhortations therefore preached he good tidings unto the people; but Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother's wife, and for all the evil things which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that, Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him, and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

(c.) 1.

23-38. And Jesus himself, when he began, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, the son of Jesus, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Symeon, the son of Judas, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of

Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

c. 2.

iv. 1-13. And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days, being tempted of the devil.

And he did eat nothing in those days: and when they were completed, he hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command this stone that it become bread. And Jesus answered unto him, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone.

And he led him up, and shewed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, To thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them: for it hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship before me, it shall all be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

And he led him to Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, to guard thee: and, On their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

And when the devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season.

**PART I. 1.—VII. 50.**

**NOTES**

**WHAT JESUS BEGAN TO DO AND TO TEACH.**



## CHAPTER A. I. 1.—IV. 13.

### JESUS.

a. i. 1-4. b. i. 5.—iii. 22. c. iii. 23.—iv. 13.

#### a.

i. 1-4. *The Introduction.* It may, perchance, have been the same elsewhere as it was at Corinth, that “not many wise after the flesh” were called; but the fact that there were any at all shows that in the ranks of the Christians, men of trained intellect were to be found; men used to investigations, skilful in weighing evidence, careful in testing conclusions; men who accepted nothing unless it were well attested; who were satisfied with nothing short of certainty. Such a man was the writer of this treatise, and for such men he evidently wrote.

The treatise was written for a definite purpose, and by that purpose everything in it must be judged. The writer had been investigating some instruction which he, and a number of others, had received; and the fruit of his researches he arranged as if in answer to the enquiries of a man called Theophilus, who wished to know the certainty of the things in which he had been instructed. Some idea of the mental calibre of those for whom it was written can be formed from the treatise itself; for its readers were supposed to be able, not merely to read and understand it, but to recognise the full force of its statements, to weigh the evidence, to examine, if necessary, the witnesses, and then, fully convinced, to go forth and carry on their work for Christ with boldness.



The writer's way was that of a scientific man who is certifying people of something. In the first place, he gave his readers nothing but what he himself had carefully examined; so that they could regard every statement in the treatise as guaranteed by him to be correct. But accurate as such statements would be, he did not expect his readers to accept them on his own unsupported testimony. With every vitally important part of his proof, he either gave the names of living eye-witnesses, who could vouch for it, and supply all the details which an enquirer might want to know, or else gave copies of documents, to the originals of which the enquirer could turn and test their accuracy.

It is, of course, the degree of knowledge and intelligence of those for whom a person is writing that decides where the giving of proofs shall begin, what range those proofs shall have; and with what fulness they shall be given. In this treatise, Theophilus, who represents the readers, is evidently assumed to have been an educated man. As an educated man he could not have failed to be familiar with the theory of the formation of the universe which was current in his day. The rudiments of what is now popularly known as the Evolutionary Theory had had a place for centuries in the educated world; but however fully Theophilus may have accepted that theory, it is taken for granted that he believed in God as the First Cause of all. That meant that he held the laws of nature to be laws of God; and that to account fully for any event which was undeniably a departure from those laws, it had to be traced back to the great First Cause, and shown to have been done by special power derived from God Himself. It is also taken for granted that he believed it to be possible for God to make His will known to men; and that, at times, He had done so by His Holy Spirit, notably to people known in the Old Testament as prophets, whose claim to have received such communications was upheld by their words having, in due time, come true.

The bulk of the proof which was offered him is made up of quotations from the words of Jesus, and of very condensed accounts of His doings. The parables and miracles are used in a way which belongs to the time when they were still full of the personality of Jesus, and His explanations of them were still well known. It was this familiarity of his readers with the sayings and doings of Jesus, that enabled the evangelist to bring in new matter with the very barest introduction, or with none at all: a method which, although perplexing at times, is well in keeping with the style of a treatise in which there are no superfluous words, and from which everything has been cut out which does not bear directly upon the subject in hand. As for the things related, everything, from the beginning of the treatise to the end, is given without the least sign of sorrow or joy on the part of the writer, or any expression of feeling whatever. He has kept steadfastly to what he had evidently set before himself at the outset; namely, to give the bare facts, and to leave his readers to form their own judgments unbiassed.

Those who really wish to find out for themselves the certainty of the things in which such people as Theophilus were instructed, must put themselves in the same position with regard to the treatise as that in which he was supposed to stand. To do this they have first of all to know what those things were, and then to carry themselves back to the time when it was written; bearing in mind that the evangelist was vouching from personal investigation for the accuracy of all his statements; that it was still possible to test their truth, and that the names of the people and places mentioned were given to aid the readers in making their tests.

No list is given of the things in which Theophilus had been instructed. This much, however, is certain, that they must have corresponded exactly with what was said about them in the treatise; and that they were supposed to have

been set forth in it so plainly, that any who had received that instruction, would readily recognise them. Nor is there any title to the treatise. When, in after years, the evangelist referred to it, it was not by any name, but by its beginning and ending; as the treatise which ranged from "All that Jesus began both to do and to teach" to the Ascension (Acts 1:1, 2).

The treatise is divided into four parts of five chapters each. The first part is about what Jesus began to do and to teach, and its five chapters form the groundwork for the rest of the treatise. The third of these chapters is enlarged upon in Part II; each of its five sections forming the beginning of one of the chapters of that part. The fourth is used in the same way for Part III. The fifth, however, has only three sections; these are used for the first three chapters of Part IV, thus leaving the last two chapters of that part to be otherwise provided for. This is done by means of the first two chapters of the treatise, thereby making it wind up as it had begun; the next to the last chapter of the treatise forming the continuation of its second chapter, and the last, the completion of the first.

All the chapters are formed on the same plan; a very simple one, familiar to teachers of science. First come a few words bearing upon the subject under consideration; then a thorough explanation, or proof of it, as the case may be; and lastly one or two confirming proofs, illustrations, or practical applications of the subject as unfolded in the body of the chapter. These three divisions have been marked by the letters *a*, *b*, *c*, respectively. As a rule, the body *b* of each chapter is divided into five sections. The only exceptions are the fifth, which has three sections, and the first and last, which have ten each.

The way in which the chapters are introduced is not that of the present day. No title heads them; nor is the subject under consideration stated in such plain terms that a casual reader can see at a glance what the chapter is

about. It was evidently supposed that for any one who had received the course of instruction and knew the order in which the treatise was arranged, nothing more was needed than that the opening statement should contain a very brief foreshadowing of what was being dealt with in the body of the chapter, and that occasionally it should be led up to by the closing part of the previous chapter.

The first chapter is all about Jesus, His birth and nature: and yet, in its introduction, which also serves as an introduction to the whole treatise, His name is not even mentioned; nor is He referred to directly at all, unless we take "the word," of which those instructors were the ministers, to be the Word Himself. It is taken for granted that the readers would know that everything Christian rests upon Christ; and that He is the only foundation: and that the certainty of all the things in which Theophilus had been instructed depended upon who Jesus is.

It was not expected that a man like Theophilus would accept without evidence what his teachers had told him about Jesus, even though he knew them to be good, truthful men, men who firmly believed what they said, and were ready to suffer martyrdom rather than forswear it. A man such as he was supposed to be would need proofs, and sound proofs too: for unless such proofs were forthcoming he would have had no certainty but that it was another of those shadowy myths, with which he was so familiar, that he was being told about. It would have had to be traced back to its very source, and every step of the way made firm with ample proof. That teaching about the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth must have had a beginning. When did the belief in it begin? When was that divinity first spoken about?

The answer was, that although the acknowledgment of the divinity of Jesus came gradually, slowly forced from men by His life and mighty works, the idea of it did not grow gradually; nor did the knowledge of it come in the

first place from men. Both human beings and heavenly beings were used in making it known; but the tidings originally came, as indeed they only could come, from God Himself. No list is given of all the times when it was proclaimed; but only such occasions as were needed for tracing His earthly career from its beginning. It was proclaimed, the evangelist assured him, from the very first; having, before His conception, been declared of Him by name by one Gabriel who spoke as the messenger of God: and the person who first heard about it was the Virgin Mary. The occasion was when the announcement was made to her that she would conceive a Son of the Holy Ghost.

Then who was this Gabriel? Who had ever seen him? And what guarantee was there that he was in truth the messenger of God? What evidence was there that he ever gave this message to Mary? Such were evidently the very natural questions which Theophilus was supposed to make in his enquiries into this part of the instruction he had received; for it was those questions which the evangelist began his treatise by answering.

*Summary of the chapter.* First of all he showed, by what occurred in the holy place, that Gabriel was a real, living being; who upheld his claim to be the messenger of God by the sign which he gave Zacharias, and by his foreknowledge of the birth and marvellous life of the child that Elisabeth would have.

Then he told Theophilus how, between five and six months later, that same angel Gabriel was sent by God to announce the coming of His Son. The chosen one through whom He was to make His entry into the world as Man, was the Virgin Mary of Nazareth of Galilee; and the conception was not by means of man, but by God the Holy Ghost.

Testimony to the conception came in a few days; and came in the first place, from God Himself, from the Holy Ghost through Whom it had taken place. Elisabeth, speak-

ing under the influence of the Holy Ghost, proclaimed it when Mary entered her house and saluted her; and it was then confirmed by the Virgin herself in the *Magnificat*.

The earthly messenger chosen by God to be the forerunner of His Son, was born in due time; and, in obedience to the command through Gabriel, was called John. His birth, which took place about three months after the conception of Jesus, was made the occasion by the Holy Ghost for testifying to the existence of the unborn Child, and also for proclaiming more fully the part which the child John would have in preparing the way for Him.

The proof that Jesus is the Son of God, the promised Saviour of the world, runs through the whole treatise, and culminates in the resurrection. What is now being proved is that He, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, was Jesus of Nazareth, the true Son of man; that His divine origin was never lost sight of, and that He was steadily proclaimed to be the Christ, the Saviour of the world, the Son of God.

In proving this the evangelist began with His birth at Bethlehem, and then traced Him from infancy to manhood; from the day of His birth until all was ready for Him to begin His ministry. Dealing with His human nature, he not only proved that the Child, Whose conception Gabriel had announced, was He Who was afterwards known as Jesus of Nazareth, but also showed that He grew up in accordance with the laws of growth of human beings. The times of life which he chose for tracing His growth as the Son of man, were those which were so noteworthy in the life of a Jew; namely, circumcision, presentation to God, first passover, and manhood. And he also showed that each of those stages in the development of the Child was marked by the recognition of His divine nature and mission; a recognition which, at His anointing to be the Christ, reached its climax when the voice from heaven proclaimed Him to all as the beloved Son of God. Every statement

was accompanied by information such as would enable Theophilus to investigate it for himself.

The two confirming proofs which close the chapter form a pair like those found in the body of the chapter, and deal, the first with the Manhood, and the second with the Godhead of Jesus. They confirm the conclusion which the evangelist had reached, that Jesus of Nazareth was the same Child Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary; the same of Whom the angel had made known the news that He is the Saviour, Christ the Lord.

### b. 1.

#### THE HEAVENLY MESSENGER.

##### i. 5-25. The vision in the temple.

The evangelist began his evidence for the Annunciation by proving to Theophilus that Gabriel was a real being, an angel, or messenger of God; and that he was what he claimed to be, a heavenly messenger specially sent by God to announce the coming of the earthly messenger who would prepare the way for Jesus. This he did by giving him the evidence of a man who had seen Gabriel, and had spoken with him.

The proof, briefly put, was this. He had been seen, and spoken to, by Zacharias the priest, and under such conditions as to make it certain that he could not have been a human being. Also he had told Zacharias that he was specially sent by God to announce the birth of a child, who would go before the face of the Lord his God in the spirit and power of Elijah; and had upheld his claim to be the messenger of God by the strange things which he foretold.

Zacharias, having been the only eye-witness, was the only one who could have told from personal knowledge what took place inside the sanctuary that day. What others could prove about it was, that he was there in the holy place at that very time; that no other human being could possibly

have been there; and that when he came out, he was dumb, and gave the people to understand that he had seen a vision.

That Zacharias was in the holy place at that time, Theophilus could have found out by turning to the lists of the course of Abia, and seeing who it was that had drawn the lot for offering incense on that day. According to the Jewish law, at the beginning of the offering of incense he was left there alone, and no one else was allowed to enter during the service. Seeing that the holy place had but one entrance, and that that faced the people who were outside praying, no one could have gone in unseen; so that, till the close of his duty, he was the only human being who was there.

It was at the right side of the altar of incense, in the full light of the seven-branched candlestick, that the being appeared. At first, Zacharias was troubled, thinking that some man had come in profaning the holy place; but when it dawned upon him what kind of person the newcomer was, fear fell upon him.

The proof that this being who appeared to him, was a messenger, or "angel," of the Lord, rests, not upon any opinion formed by Zacharias, but upon the word of the person himself, and the strange message that he brought about things to come; a message which came true in every particular. The part fulfilled in the life-time of Zacharias would have been vouched for by Zacharias; such as the answer to his prayer by the birth of a son, and his joy and gladness at that birth. That which had to do with the life the child would lead, was readily proved to be true by the career of John the Baptist. Moreover the things themselves which were declared of the child, his greatness in the sight of the Lord, his style of living, his spirituality, his success as a preacher, his being the long-promised forerunner of the Christ, the Elijah who would be sent before the great and glorious day of the Lord came, were all such as no earthly being could possibly foresee of anyone, more



especially of any one who did not even exist. It was by the fulfilment of all these marvellous statements that the credibility of the speaker was established, and his claim accepted, that he was Gabriel, who stood in the presence of God, and was used by Him as His messenger.

To Zacharias the things which he heard were wild and visionary; and with plain common sense he met them in their seeming unreality, by recalling something which struck at the very foundation of it all: the hopeless childlessness of himself and his aged wife.

Then the speaker declared himself, and his authority; and gave Zacharias something to convince him. His name was Gabriel. His place of abode the presence of God. That he was there speaking to him at all, was because God had sent him; and the good news which he had brought, he brought as the messenger of God. Zacharias had asked for a sign. The sign would be dumbness until the day when the things spoken of came to pass.

The unwonted delay was enough to arouse the people's attention. They had always been used to see the ministering priest return when the smoke of the incense arose; and as the slightest break in any well-known ritual is noticed at once, his long stay in the temple would have fixed the wondering gaze of them all upon the curtained opening. When, at last, he came out, there was a look upon his face which showed that he had seen a sight in the holy place from which he had not yet recovered; and instead of blessing them, he could only make signs, for he was dumb. The proof about Gabriel's being a messenger of God had already begun. So startling an event, and taking place at such a time, would have been known far and wide: and there was abundant time for it to be searched into; for, dumb though he was, Zacharias finished his week of ministry before returning home. A further proof was then given by the fact of Elisabeth's conception.

Like as the child, in after life, was in the desert, away

from the abode of men, till Jesus was about to come as the Christ, so, at his conception, his mother hid herself five months till Jesus was about to come as man conceived in the Virgin Mary. The reason she gave for thus hiding herself, showed her knowledge of what Zacharias had been told about the future of the child, and served as corroborative evidence of it.

Although the evangelist has given nothing in this treatise but what he himself had gone carefully into, and found to be true, yet, because of the great issues at stake, he always expected his readers to enquire into the statements that he made, and test them for themselves; and to help them in their researches, he put at their disposal, for all the chief events, records and references such as he himself had used. Not that he has said in so many words, that this or that person was a witness to whom Theophilus could go, and satisfy himself of the truth of what he was being told. It was taken for granted that he would know that, whenever a name was mentioned in connection with anything, he could go to that person for further information, unless some note were added to show that he, or she, was not being used as a reference. Thus his being told that it was in the days of Herod, king of Judæa, that the aged couple lived, made it plain enough that, at the time of writing, they were dead; and that it was not to them personally that he was being referred. It was evidently to some records they had left that he was to go; records which had to do with the birth of the famous John the Baptist. How they would have come to be written was because Zacharias having suddenly become dumb, writing was the only way in which he could give his wife the full account, she naturally would want, of all that had taken place in the temple that day. Once written they would have been treasured up by her, if only for the fact that they had to do with the son of her old age, her only child. As the character of people upon whom so much depended was of the utmost

importance, the evangelist reported as the result of his enquiries, that they were people of deep piety, who had lived blameless lives; the kind of people whose word could be fully trusted.

This evangelist rarely gives a solitary reference, and Theophilus was by no means expected to be satisfied with the evidence of those records alone. Other means of testing what he was being told were put into his hands. For instance, the information that Zacharias was a priest, enabled him to test what was said about him and his wife, by turning to the carefully kept records of the priestly families and the marriages of priests. Seeing also that a priest was allowed to enter into the holy place and offer incense only once in a life-time, lists would have had to be kept; and the lists of the course of Abia, to which Zacharias belonged, would have shown when his turn had come; even if they had not also recorded his strange failure to give the blessing, and his explanation of that failure. Moreover what took place would have been known to the members of the course who were on duty at the time; and to survivors of them Theophilus could go.

But what vouches above all for the absolute truthfulness of this and the rest of the Baptist records that are quoted, is the fact, that the child became a very noted man, and had numbers of devoted followers to whom all records about him would have been well known. As this gospel was published during the life-time of many of those followers, the slightest change or addition would at once have been detected, and would have been eagerly seized upon by the unbelieving Jews to destroy, at its very foundation, the Christians' claim to the divinity of Jesus by showing that the evidence offered for the Incarnation was untrustworthy.

The proof that Gabriel was what he claimed to be, a messenger of the Lord, could only be completed when the time came for his predictions to be fulfilled; but enough had

been said about him to justify the evangelist in passing on to the great announcement that he made.

b. 2.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

i. 26-38. Gabriel's announcement.

The only eye-witness for the Annunciation was the Virgin Mary; and it was to her that Theophilus, and those whom he represented, were to go for the confirmation of what the evangelist now said about this all-important part of the proof of the divinity of Jesus, the Incarnation. To her the evangelist, in tracing the course of all things accurately from the first, had gone himself; and what she told him he has related in her own words, except where he has used the name of the speaker instead of the pronouns of the first person.

The account is given in his usual abrupt way. The time was the sixth month after Elisabeth's conception; the place, Nazareth of Galilee; the person, a virgin espoused to a man called Joseph, of the house of David; the virgin's name, Mary. To her came Gabriel, the messenger of God.

It was because he had already given the needful evidence about Gabriel, that the evangelist was able to refer to him thus without a word of explanation; and to confine himself wholly to the instruction Theophilus had received about Jesus of Nazareth: that He had no human father, but was conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary.

Gabriel's words of greeting were beautiful; but coming in such a way, Mary was greatly troubled at them. Whilst she was puzzling about what kind of salutation it might be, the angel spoke again, explaining it.

She would conceive, he told her, and would bring forth a Son; and call His name Jesus. He also gave her a description of the Child and His mission; a description of which only the beginning could be touched upon in this

treatise, for it goes on for ever. The Child would have a two-fold nature, and would be both human and divine. He would be great, and also be called the Son of the Most High; He would fill the throne of His father David; would reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and have an eternal kingdom. Great and glorious was the career that he outlined, the life of the Messiah, the One hoped for by the people of God; and wonderful it was for her to hear that she had thus found favour with God; but for a virgin to have a child, she knew, and declared, to be impossible. The golden vision of the future was shattered by a simple reference to the laws of nature.

Then she learned that the conception of the Child would be, not natural, but super-natural. It would be by the direct action of God Himself; by the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the overshadowing power of the Most High: and the Child would therefore be called the Son of God.

This heavenly announcement, so hard to believe, was accompanied by a surprising earthly one, whose accuracy she could easily test, and from which she could learn that "no word of God shall be void of power": the aged Elisabeth was with child. But Mary needed no such aid to make her bow to the will of God, whatsoever that will might be; and she made known at once her humble submission to His decree.

His message accepted, the angel departed.

### b. 3.

#### THE CONCEPTION.

i. 39-56. The Virgin Mary's visit to Elisabeth.

Mary evidently took no steps to test the truth of Gabriel's words until something occurred, the evangelist does not say what, which made her arise, and go with haste all the way from Nazareth of Galilee to the hill country of Judah to the house of Zachariah to see Elisabeth. Arriving there, she found that the first part of the earthly test

which Gabriel had given her was true, and that Elisabeth was with child.

But it was not merely to tell Theophilus about the truth of that part of Gabriel's message, that the evangelist gave him this account of Mary's journey. There was also the remarkable evidence for Gabriel's announcement and for the conception of the Child, which was given by Elisabeth only a few days after the event had taken place. It was in answer to the Virgin's salutation that it was given, and before anything whatever had been said by her about the Incarnation; and it was spoken under the influence of the Holy Ghost, through Whom Jesus had been conceived.

Her words showed a clear knowledge of what had taken place, and of the two-fold nature of the Child. They showed a knowledge of the fact that the Virgin Mary was with child, when she blessed the fruit of her womb; and a knowledge of the divinity of the Child, when she spoke of Him as her Lord, and described the joy of her own babe. It would seem that Mary then told her all the words of Gabriel, for she ended by extolling her faith, and assuring her of the fulfilment of "the things which had been spoken to her from the Lord."

Both Elisabeth's words and Mary's answer, having to do with the joy of the babe of whose coming Zacharias had been so wonderfully informed, would have been written down at the time for him to know about them; as well as the great news, that what Elisabeth had said was not spoken by herself unaided, but because she was moved to speak by a power within her, the Spirit of God.

In keeping with his rule of never offering unsupported evidence, the evangelist added the testimony of the Virgin Mary herself. She would, of course, have been able to confirm personally all that Theophilus was being told; but that would have been testimony of a somewhat late date, and what was wanted was the very earliest evidence possible: so the evangelist gave him instead a copy of the *Magnificat*;

or as it has been called from the earliest ages, the Song of the Blessed Virgin.

For the *Magnificat* to have had such weight as evidence as the evangelist clearly assumed it to have, it must, at the time when he wrote the treatise, have been well known as the certified composition of the Virgin Mary, made when she visited Elisabeth. From time immemorial this Song has been used in the public worship of the Church; but whatever may have given rise to that use, it is evident that it did not first become known because it was recorded in this Gospel, but that, on the contrary, it was recorded in it because it was already well-known, and was so well authenticated that it had an assured value as evidence for the event to which it refers. That is how it is that we find the *Magnificat* cited here as being certified evidence of the very early public knowledge of Gabriel's message to the Virgin Mary, the testimony which she herself had placed on record a few days after the angel had appeared to her and made his great announcement.

Its opening verses recall the words of Hannah about her God-given child. The Song itself fits in perfectly with what had just been related, and sets forth the relief of the Virgin on finding Gabriel's information about Elisabeth to be true; the effect upon her of Elisabeth's reverent welcome and confirmation of Gabriel's message; and also the Virgin's deep joy at the untroubled thought of the divine condescension. It is full of references to the contents of the message, and her answer as the handmaid of the Lord; and is a plain and open acknowledgment of the message itself, and of her acceptance of it. The emphatic certainty with which she declared that, from that time onward, she would be called blessed by all races of people, and the reasons which she gave for speaking thus, show plainly how sure she was that it was by the operation of the Holy Ghost that she had conceived; whilst the close of her Song shows that she knew that it was God's promise to Abraham that was

being fulfilled in her, and fulfilled in the way in which He had said it would be; and that she, a virgin, had conceived and would bring forth the Child Who was to save God's people from their sins.

The note about the length of Mary's stay may have been to show that she made sure that the second part of Gabriel's statement was also true, and that it was indeed the sixth month with her that was called barren; but it was also meant to keep before Theophilus the age of the unborn Child when the events in the next two sections took place. That about her return to her own home, served to locate her until the evangelist mentioned her again in his account of the birth of Jesus.

#### b. 4.

##### THE EARTHLY MESSENGER

##### i. 57-66. The birth of John the Baptist.

In due time a child was born to the aged Elisabeth, and, as Gabriel had foretold, it was a son. Of the truth of that event, Theophilus would have had no trouble in assuring himself. The birth of a child was always a time of rejoicing; but for the first-born to have come in the mother's old age, and the reproach of barrenness, the gloom of a long life to have passed away so near its close, was something so wonderful, that her neighbours and kinsfolk came to rejoice with her for the way in which the Lord had magnified His mercy towards her, and thus became witnesses to the child's birth.

That this was the child foretold by Gabriel, was made clear on the eighth day, when, in the naming prayer, they called him Zacharias after his father; for the mother at once stopped the prayer, saying, "Not so, but he shall be called John." It was not as an anecdote of John the Baptist that the evangelist told Theophilus this, but to show that it was her knowledge of Gabriel's message to her husband, and her firm belief that this was the child foretold, and that it was



God's will that he should be so named, that made Elisabeth so stedfast in withstanding her kinsfolk and neighbours. A like belief and obedience were shown by Zacharias, when, on the tablet, he wrote, "His name is John."

Two effects of those words were thought by the evangelist to be worth recording for the purpose of the treatise. One was the astonishment of all the kinsfolk and neighbours at so strange a departure from custom, and at the way in which both the father and the mother were set upon that name; for that astonishment would account to Theophilus for such a seemingly trifling thing, as the naming of a child, having been remembered. The other was the startling effect upon Zacharias. As soon as ever he had written the words and named the child, the punishment for his unbelief ceased. His dumbness ended as suddenly as it had begun; and he spake, blessing God. What Gabriel had foretold about both Zacharias and Elisabeth had come to pass.

The references which the evangelist, according to his custom, now gave Theophilus, were "for all these sayings." These must be taken to include, not only the two or three short sentences just given, and the words which Zacharias spake, blessing God, but all that had been said in connection with the child from the beginning, including the Song of the Virgin Mary. The people to whom he could go and learn about them, were not only the neighbours and kinsfolk of Zacharias and Elisabeth, but the natives generally of that part of the land called the hill country of Judea. How it came about that so many knew those sayings, and laid them up in their hearts, was, in the first place, through the fear which fell upon the neighbourhood, when they found such strange things taking place in their midst. The fear cannot have arisen merely because a dumb man suddenly regained his speech, or because they happened to hear him begin to speak when his son had been called John. It must have been because they had learned that that strange dumbness was the punishment laid upon him for his unbelief

about the child, and they dreaded lest some such calamity should befall them also.

That fear would have accounted for the swift spread of the news in the hill country of Judæa; but the reason why all those sayings were treasured up in their hearts, would have been because "the hand of the Lord" was with the child. It was an Old Testament expression for the inspiration of the prophets by God; and hopes were raised in their hearts that he would prove to be that prophet whom God had promised to raise up from among their brethren. Such hopes would fully account for their remembrance of everything remarkable that was connected with the child: and the strange life which he soon began to lead, would have kept those sayings ever fresh in their minds, and made them household words.

The wonderful difference which they saw between this child and other children, and recognized as being due the presence of a great spiritual power, the hand of God Himself, helped to prove that Gabriel had spoken as God's messenger, by showing that just as he had said, and as none but God could have foreknown, John was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.

Although no separate part of the treatise is devoted to the being and attributes of the third Person of the Holy Trinity, enough is said from time to time to show clearly what Theophilus had been taught about Him. Thus in the Annunciation Gabriel, the messenger of God, is quoted as speaking of the Holy Ghost as the Most High; that is, as being co-equal with God the Father: and now by its being given as the fulfilment of the promise that John should be filled with the Holy Ghost, that "the hand of the Lord was with him," it is made plain that Theophilus had been taught that it is He Who spake by the prophets; and that whatsoever was wrought by "the Hand of the Lord" was the work of the Holy Ghost.

## b. 5.

## THE UNBORN CHILD AND HIS FORERUNNER

## i. 67-80. The song of Zacharias.

The way in which the Song of Zacharias is quoted seems to show that its use and value as evidence were so well known that nothing beyond the bare record of it was needed. It is the witness of Zacharias that Jesus had been conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary as Gabriel had announced; and fills its place in the chain of evidence which links the Incarnation with the Ascension, by testifying to the unborn Child as being the Son of God.

The foretellings of Gabriel had already begun to be reckoned amongst things that had taken place. To Zacharias, the Incarnation was a fact. He regarded it as something which had already happened; and with that as a standpoint, he interpreted the message which Gabriel had given him about his son, and also about Him Whom he had called "the Lord his God," before Whose face that son would go. With Zacharias, as with Elisabeth, the unborn Child of the Virgin Mary was the Lord; and it was His forerunner that their own child John was to be.

The occasion of the composition of the Song was the birth of a son to Elisabeth, the woman of the house of Aaron. It was spoken about three months after the Virgin Mary had come to visit her, and about six months before the birth of Jesus. To Theophilus, its evidential value lay in its being known for a fact, that it was composed by Zacharias under the conditions described, and at the time indicated.

The conditions under which it was uttered were such as to make it one of the most treasured heirlooms which the family could possess; for Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost when he prophesied thus. A prophet not only proclaimed new messages from God, but also explained and applied what had already been made known; and it was as

one of those whom God made use of thus to speak for Him, that Zacharias enlarged upon the messages of Gabriel. Dealing first with the Annunciation, he declared that its fulfilment had begun, and that God had visited and wrought redemption for His people: then, turning to the message about his own son, he interpreted his forerunnership as having to do with making ready the way for the coming of this Saviour. He summed up, as it were, what had already taken place, and foreshadowed what was to follow; and it was known at the time that he did this, not of himself, but under the special influence of Him Who spake by the prophets.

Two children have been mentioned in this chapter: the Child of the house of David, and the child of the house of Aaron. The first part of Zacharias' testimony was about the Child of the house of David, and showed a knowledge of the Annunciation and the Incarnation; thus enabling the evangelist to trace, without a break, the earthly life of Jesus. The three-month's Child of the house of David, he identified with the One Whose coming Gabriel had announced; and with the identification, gave the life-work by which that Child would be known. The kind of proof was the same as that which the evangelist used later on: the testimony of the works of Jesus. He would give salvation to God's people; and He would show forth His mercy towards them. He would fulfil God's covenant to deliver His down-trodden people, and free them so that they would be able to render Him holy and righteous service.

The second part of the testimony of Zacharias dealt with the life-work of his own son, the child of the house of Aaron, whose description had also been given by Gabriel. The interpretations of the two messages are joined in such a way as to show that Zacharias looked upon the unborn Child as the Lord, and the child John as His forerunner; the unborn Child as bringing salvation, and John as preparing for it. John's work would therefore help to identify this Child in later life, for He would follow the same course

which His forerunner took. It is evident that the work of such a man would not have been left for him to choose for himself at will, but would have been laid down by the decree of God; and also that the fore-knowledge of that work would likewise have come from God: so we find that the evangelist, after having shown that the original plan of John's life-work came from God by His messenger Gabriel, goes on to show how, by the guidance of the Holy Ghost, Zacharias took those predictions of Gabriel, and applied them to John.

Gabriel described John and his work from one point of view, Zacharias from another. The description of Gabriel is more like that of an onlooker, who is watching a man going forth to his work; whilst that of Zacharias is from the stand-point of the people to whom John was to be sent. They both began by describing the man, and both closed with statements about his work. Those given by Zacharias were such as plainly belonged to a spokesman of the Most High, for they had to do with remission of sins, light to those in darkness, and leading into peace. And the forerunner's work perfected would be the work of the unborn Child with Whom his life was prophetically linked.

The references for enabling Theophilus to trace this Song had already been given him. The fulfilment of the prophecies in it about the child John would be found in his ministry, to which the attention of Theophilus was drawn by the closing note. The note itself is a short summary of the life of the child described in the latter part of the Song; identifying him with the Baptist, and keeping him in attendance, as it were, by following his career until the time came when his evidence about Jesus would be needed.

The hold of John the Baptist upon the men of his time was very great, and his actual following, vast; so that the details of his early life would have been known and treasured by many. Unconverted Jews would have been able to see, quite as well as Christians, how important it

was, in proving the divinity of Jesus, that all these citations from the Baptist records should be true: that this Song, for instance, was spoken by Zacharias at the time of John's naming; that the words of Elisabeth were spoken by her, as stated, at the time of the Virgin's visit; and that all that was said about the vision in the temple was true. It is easy to see what a deadly weapon it would have put into the hands of the Jewish foes of Christianity, if there had been the least difficulty in proving any of these things at the time when the publication of this treatise gave, as it were, a challenge to contest Christ's divinity.

## b. 6.

### THE BIRTH OF THE CHILD

#### ii. 1-20. Jesus' birth at Bethlehem.

In tracing the Child, Whom Gabriel had described as being both the Son of the Virgin Mary and the Son of God, the evangelist identified Him at every step by His twofold nature, the human and the divine. He showed how, soon after His conception, Elisabeth testified to Him as being the fruit of the Virgin's womb, and also as being her own Lord; and Zacharias, about three months later, as being the Horn of salvation in the house of David, and the Lord, before Whose face his own child would go: and now in telling about His birth, he has given the same two kinds of proof, and has shown that He was testified to both as being Mary's Son, and also Christ the Lord.

How it was that Mary's home was at Nazareth, and her Child was born in Bethlehem, was because a census was being taken at the time, and everyone had to go to his own city to be enrolled. Joseph not only belonged to the house of David, but also traced his descent directly from him on the father's side; so that he had to go to the city of David, to be enrolled on the register there with Mary his betrothed. In a census taken in such a way as that, people's

time was of little account; and whilst they were there awaiting their turn, the Child was born.

It was the rule in a Roman census to record, not only the names of grown up people, but also the names and ages of their children; so that by examining the entries made at Bethlehem in the first census taken whilst Quirinius was governor of Syria, Theophilus could easily have satisfied himself about the birth of Jesus. He would have found recorded there, not only the things which the evangelist has stated about the Virgin's Child, that it was a son, the mother's first-born, and born at Bethlehem, but His age as well at the time when Joseph's turn to be enrolled had come. By thus enabling the length of time to be calculated between the birth of Jesus and the notable birth-day of John the Baptist, the census supplied another link in the evidence that Jesus was the Child of Whose approaching birth both Elisabeth and Zacharias had spoken; the Child Whose conception and birth had been foretold by Gabriel.

Whatever treatment Jesus may have received from inhabitants of the earth, Theophilus was shown that, from heaven, He was always given the honour due to Him as being the Son of God. A special heavenly messenger was sent by God the Father to prepare for His coming to the earth; a special earthly messenger was raised up by the Father to prepare for the beginning of His work on earth; whilst His birth was heralded by a messenger of God from heaven, and a multitude of the heavenly host gave praise.

The Roman census certified to the human nature, the angel of God to the divine; the one declared that a babe was born at Bethlehem, the other Who that Babe is. What Zacharias, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, had foreshadowed in his Song, when he spoke of John as going before the face of the Lord, and giving the knowledge of salvation to His people, was now definitely applied to the Virgin's Child, and He was proclaimed by a messenger of God from heaven, to be the Saviour, Christ, the Lord.

It was during the night of the same day, and therefore, by the Jewish reckoning, but a few hours at the most after the birth had taken place, that a band of shepherds, watching over their flock, saw the messenger of the Lord standing by their side. The glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid; but their fear of the glory of God fled at the joy of the angel's message, "There is born to you this day in the city of David, a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord."

In this treatise there is no mixing up of names. The same name, in a section like this, must be taken to have the same meaning, unless otherwise stated; so that "the Lord" in the angel's message is used in the same way as it is in the description which goes before it; that is, as a title of God. Thus at the very beginning of the earthly life of the Babe of Bethlehem, the attributes that He would reveal to men by that life's work were proclaimed of Him: that He is the Saviour of men; that He is the Christ, the One foretold; and that He is divine, the Lord.

To help them to believe the revelation which had been made, a sign was given them: one which they could at once verify; and by means of which they could both assure themselves that it was something real that had taken place, and also form a judgment as to the trustworthiness of the speaker. That sign must have struck them as being strangely out of keeping with the glory surrounding them, and the wondrous news just given them; and the joyous song of the heavenly host must have made it still more bewildering: for it was the sign of "a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger." But what they could prove, they did prove; and when they saw the new-born Babe lying in the manger just as they had been told, they spoke openly of what they had heard about Him.

Others besides Mary and Joseph heard the shepherd's news, Theophilus was told in the note by which the evangelist supplied him with references; but to them he was



not referred. It may have been that they also were strangers who had come from a distance to be enrolled at Bethlehem; for the only use that was made of them was to show that the vision was not something kept secret till a late date, but that, scattered about in distant parts of the land, were people who would have been sure to remember the strange event. The witness to whom he was specially referred, was the Virgin Mary; as is made plain by the information given him, that she kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. Joseph was there as well, and would also have heard and remembered everything; but of him, as a reference, no use whatever was made. The certainty that Theophilus sought, called for living witnesses; people to whom he could go himself, and make enquiries: and the leaving out of Joseph would show that, at the time of the writing of the treatise, he was dead.

Nothing is given in this treatise which had not a definite part in giving Theophilus the assurance which he sought about Jesus, and some of the things which He taught and did; and the little note about the shepherds, which comes at the close of the section, was not to round off the account, but to draw his attention to them, and thereby help him in his search. Tales of strange doings last long in country places. Amongst men of such lonely lives as those which the shepherds lived, what had taken place would have been an unfailing marvel, vividly real; one which would never fail to be related to newcomers when keeping watch at the spot where the vision was seen. To shepherds of Bethlehem, whether actual eye-witnesses or not, Theophilus could have gone and learned about what had been heard and seen that night.

## b. 7.

## THE NAMING.

## ii. 21. The Circumcision.

The three great events in the life of a Jewish boy, who was a first-born child, were his circumcision on the eighth day; his presentation to the Lord, which took place after the thirty-first day; and, during his thirteenth year, his being made a son of the law, and responsible for attending the great feasts: and it was by means of things which happened in connection with those three occasions that the evangelist traced the Virgin's Child. He did it by showing that at every one of those stages of His bodily development, open testimony was given of His divine nature and mission.

A male child took his place as one of the children of Israel at his circumcision, and was thenceforth traceable by the name which he then received. The ceremony, taking place on the eighth day, was so close to the birth, that those who were present at Jesus' circumcision must have known that the Babe to Whom the name of Jesus was given, was Mary's Son, Who had been cradled in the manger, and of Whom the shepherds had declared such strange things. But none were given to Theophilus as references for this event: an omission which would seem to show that, at that time, it was so well known that records of namings were kept, that it was needless to mention them, or to add to their evidence.

The words, "which was so called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb," informed Theophilus, that, by giving Him the name of Jesus, Joseph and Mary testified that this was the Child of Whose conception and birth Gabriel had told her, the Child Who would be called the Son of God.

## b. 8.

## THE PRESENTATION

ii. 22-38. The presentation in the temple.

The next occasion chosen for the tracing of the Child was when He was presented in the temple, and openly declared by the Virgin Mary to be her first-born.

A woman's first-born child, if it were a boy, had to be presented to the Lord after it was a full month old, and then redeemed. She would not be able to present him herself unless the ceremony were put off until her days of purification had been completed; that is, until the child was about six weeks old: but as soon as ever she had been purified, she could go on with the presentation, as the Virgin Mary did, and thus make the same visit to the temple do for both ceremonies.

By thus presenting Him in the temple, she solemnly declared before God and man, that the Child Jesus was her son, her first-born.

This open declaration by the mother was accompanied by an equally open declaration about the child by God the Holy Ghost. The person through whom it was made, was Simeon; a man righteous and devout, to whom it had been revealed by the Holy Ghost, that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ.

The Lord's Christ, or the Lord's Anointed, was a kingly title given to one whom God had made king over His people. In the revelation to Simeon, it stood for the promised King for Whom he, and other faithful Jews, were looking. The Child, Whose coming Gabriel had announced, was to be that King; for to Him it was that the Lord God would give the throne of His father David: and what Simeon did, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, was to identify the infant Jesus as that Child. Led by the Spirit into the temple at the time of the presentation of Jesus, he hailed the Babe as the fulfilment of God's promise, and declared Him to be the Salvation of God.

The evangelist made it very clear to Theophilus that Simeon was only the mouth-piece for the news which he published; and that, like the rest of what he had been told about the divinity of Jesus, it was not the fruit of man's discovery, or invention. Simeon, indeed, like every other pious Jew, would have known the words of the prophecy of Isaiah about the Servant who was to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and turn the dispersion of Israel, who was to be for a light of the Gentiles, and for salvation unto the end of the earth; but who would be that Servant, he could not have known of himself, nor did he profess to know. When he took that six-weeks-old Babe into his arms, and proclaimed Him to be the Lord's Christ, the One Who was to do such glorious things, he did it because of a revelation from God; so that it was the witness of God Himself that He was giving.

When this treatise was written, Simeon must long have been dead; but even had he been alive, his testimony, being given after the fame of Jesus had spread, would have had far less weight than if it had been given at the time when Jesus was still an infant and unknown; and it was because his words at the presentation in the temple were contemporaneous evidence, that the evangelist quoted them.

The Song of Simeon is a record of the words in which he testified that he had received a revelation from God, and that the Child Jesus was the One Whom God had pointed out to him as the Salvation of God, the Light of the Gentiles, the Glory of His people Israel. As with the rest of the Songs quoted by this evangelist, for it to have had the conclusive force which it was expected to have, it must, at the time when the treatise was written, have been well known to be Simeon's, and to have been uttered by him at the presentation of Jesus in the temple. That this was in truth its origin and date, the evangelist had ascertained by his own researches; but for all that he also gave references to his readers.

The first of these was the Virgin Mary. She would have been able to vouch, not only for the things which Simeon had said about the glory of her Son as the Lord's Anointed, but also about His humiliation; for his words to her were such as would have fixed themselves firmly in a mother's heart, and kept her in unceasing dread of their fulfilment.

She and Joseph were both marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning the Child: not marvelling to find that He would be great, for about that they already knew; but that the secret of His being should have been known to a stranger. Whilst they were marvelling, Simeon blessed them; and, probably as he was giving the Child back to the mother, thrilled her with a new and strange light upon His future. He Who was to be for the glory of God's people Israel, would also be for the falling and rising up of many of them. Like the Servant in Isaiah 49:7, who despised his life and was abhorred by the nations who were the slaves of princes, He would be for a sign; but a sign so contrary to all that men were expecting, or hoping for, that it would be spoken against. Even to herself it would come as a sword piercing her heart; so grievously would it disappoint the high hopes of Him which the message of Gabriel had raised. And that strange future of the Child, appalling in its contrast, would be the great test of the thoughts of the hearts of people; for it was the sign of the suffering Christ.

The other references that the evangelist gave Theophilus in confirmation of Simeon's witness to Jesus as the Lord's Christ, and of his having given utterance, at that very time, to the Hymn now known as the *Nunc Dimittis*, were "those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." These appear to have been the people of whom Josephus speaks as the fourth sect of the Jews, usually known as Zealots. Their watchword was Liberty; and they held God to be their only Ruler and Lord. How they came to know that Jesus had been thus hailed as the Lord's Christ, was through a woman called Anna, whose identifying record is

given. She was a person of note at that time, not only because of her very great age and holy life, but also because she was a prophetess. She came up at that very hour, and in her turn gave thanks to God. Her fastings and prayers had been answered; for the Child, Whom Simeon held in his arms, was the Lord's Christ: so she spoke of Him to all the members of the band. Their desperate rising, a few years later, may have been the outcome of what they then heard, and therefore evidence for it; but, in any case, they had preserved so faithfully the records of the acclamation of the Child Jesus as the Christ when He was presented in the temple, that the evangelist was able to make use of them as references for that event.

#### b. 9.

##### BOYHOOD

#### ii. 39-51. The visit to Jerusalem.

For anything that he might want to know about the life of Jesus until His manhood, Theophilus was supposed to go to Nazareth of Galilee, the native place of both Joseph and Mary, for it was in Joseph's household that it was spent. To that home the evangelist traced the Child by means of the note, "When they had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth." The things they had accomplished were the circumcision of the Child, the purification of His mother, His presentation to the Lord and redemption; and referring thus to them was the same as saying, that it was the Child, Whom they had named Jesus, and openly vouched for in the temple as being His mother's first-born, Who was taken by them to Nazareth, there to be known as Joseph's son. At Nazareth He grew and waxed strong like other children at that time of life: this also being noted of Him, that He was filled with wisdom, and that the grace of God was upon Him.

Thus briefly did the evangelist touch upon the human na-

ture of the growing Child. The evidence during childhood for His divine nature which he gave was that of Jesus Himself.

The time and place are both given. The place was the temple at Jerusalem. The time was just after the first Pass-over which took place when He was twelve years old.

He had entered His thirteenth year, the age when Jewish boys became "sons of the law," and had the responsibility for keeping the law laid upon them; and the change in His behaviour startled Joseph and Mary. It would seem that they had grown so used to thinking only of the human nature of the Child, that although what they had been told about His divine nature was not forgotten, it was practically put aside. On this occasion, for instance, they treated Him as an ordinary child; and when they had lost Him, sought Him only in places where a child of that age would be likely to wander. Where they found Him, was in the temple; sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and asking them questions.

The subject of Jewish teaching in the temple was the word of God. Doubtless there was a mass of tradition and mystic interpretation in their teaching; but the work in which they and their scholars were engaged, was to know and understand what had been revealed to the prophets by the Holy Ghost, or had been spoken by holy men under His influence, or else gathered by them under His guidance. It was in such work that the Child Jesus was engaged, and of which He spoke as being His Father's. The account shows that those teachers saw a great difference between the Boy and other children, and that the difference lay in His knowledge and understanding of the word of God. To them the understanding and answers of the Child seemed marvellous; and the impression is given, that their wonder arose, not because He answered better than children of His age usually did, but because they saw that His grasp of the word of God was clear and true, unclouded by human misunderstandings,

and that His answers were as the words of one who knew whereof He spake. Such understanding and answers about the word of God could only come from one who knew the mind of the Spirit by Whom it was inspired; and although those teachers of Israel were astonished at them, they were but tokens of parentage which had to be shown by One Who was the Child of the Holy Ghost.

When answering His mother, it was as the Son of man Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary that He was referring to Himself, and not as the eternal Son of the Father. Treating that divine Conception as a known and established fact, He reminded His mother and Joseph, that He, Whom they had sought, was the Child Who was thus conceived by God the Holy Ghost; and that they who knew this, ought also to have known what He would be doing.

His mother and Joseph, however, did not understand the saying which He spake to them, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" That He was conceived by the Holy Ghost they knew well, and must have known that it was to His divine origin that He was referring; but that it was the Holy Ghost Who inspired the sacred writers and that the unfolding, interpreting, and applying of the Scriptures is also His special work, they would not know. Hence their perplexity at being expected to understand that His entrance into the sonship of the law would be marked by His devoting Himself to the study of the Scriptures.

What He said showed that the Boy Himself knew about His parentage; but, as Theophilus was told, He sank that knowledge, as He had sunk His majesty and power, and went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject unto them; living like a simple child. That His obedience was remarkable, like His knowledge of the Scriptures which so surprised the teachers, was shown by the lack of watchfulness on His parents' part when they first left Jerusalem, and by their great astonishment at finding in Him what looked like signs of wilful disobedience, when, instead of trying to find them,



and follow them home, He was there calmly seated in the temple, apparently heedless of the unwonted sorrow He had given them.

The account closed, as usual, with a reference to vouch for what had been said. Joseph was again passed over; and it was to Mary, the mother of Jesus, who "kept all these sayings in her heart," that Theophilus was referred.

### b. 10.

#### MANHOOD.

ii. 52.—iii. 22. Jesus and the forerunner.

The tracing of the Virgin's Child was drawing to a close. From the beginning to the end, that tracing was done by means of His two natures, the human and the divine, and the things related arranged in such a way as to show that "although He be God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ." Not only were the proofs for those two natures each time paired, but into every testimony to the divinity of Jesus, the fact of His humanity was also introduced; as if to show that the oneness of the Christ arises from the taking of the manhood into God.

There was no need for the evangelist to prove that a person who had reached manhood, had grown up according to the laws of growth of human beings. Such proof would only have been required if the claim had been made that those laws had been departed from; so that all that he had to do was to say that the Child Whom he had traced to Joseph's household, full of wisdom with the grace of God upon Him, grew up to manhood; that His holy life was held in the highest esteem by His fellow-townsmen; and that the older He grew, the more did that esteem increase.

The second part of the section has to do as usual with the divinity of Jesus, and is made up of evidence for the recognition of it during His manhood stage. A sketch of John the Baptist, preaching, teaching, testifying, was given Theophilus, by means of which he was furnished with a God-given

outline of Jesus as the Saviour Who is Christ the Lord, and also of the way in which He would arrange for His second coming to be prepared for: for the course which the fore-runner followed under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, was that which would be taken by the One Who came after him.

Like all the rest of the treatise, it was because of their bearing upon the things in which Theophilus had been instructed, that these sayings and doings of John were selected by the evangelist. What he told him was briefly this: that at the time appointed John was sent by God, and showed the way which the Lord, according to the prophecy, would take when He came. That way would be known by three things: sinners would be warned; the baptized prepared; and all would then be shown the salvation of God, a description of the Bringer of which was next given.

The evangelist began by showing that the time had come for the Christ to be upon the earth. Two prophecies combined to fix that time. One was Gen. 49:10, which, in the Septuagint Version, reads thus: "A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a leader from his loins, until there come the things laid up for him; and he is the expectation of the nations." The words vary in different versions; but their general agreement is, that the passing of the sceptre from Judah would be a sign that "He that cometh" had already come. In the fifteenth year of of Tiberius Cæsar every part of the land was under a foreigner; and over them all a heathen emperor ruled. The temporal power had passed out of the hands of the Jews. So also had the spiritual power. The high priesthood was held at the will of a foreigner, who appointed and deposed at pleasure; and two men were actually holding office at the same time: a fact which plainly sealed the prophecy. The sceptre had departed, and therefore the Christ had already come.

The other prophecy which had to be fulfilled, was that of Malachi 4:5, 6. Before the Christ would begin His work, a man would be sent by God to do the things foretold of

Elijah. That messenger was John the Baptist. In that same fifteenth year of the Emperor Tiberius, "the word of God" came to him; and forthwith he set out upon his mission. Whoever came as the Christ must therefore have been born before that date, and not have begun his ministry until after it.

The course which the Christ would follow, would be the same which the messenger took who was sent to survey the way before Him. It was a strange way; and, as the evangelist took care to point out, it was not of John's devising. "The word of God" had come to him in the wilderness, as to one of the prophets of old; and what he proclaimed and taught was the fruit of what was then made known to him. He came proclaiming as a herald the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. It was not a baptism for the remission of sins; but one that set a seal upon repentance, and led up to the washing away of sins in Baptism by Him Who was to come, the Christ Whom John proclaimed.

The plan which he followed was not a new one. Centuries before it had been recorded in Isaiah 40:3, 4 as having been made known by God. What had then been revealed by the Holy Ghost was, under His guidance, developed by John; and, in due course, was brought to perfection by Jesus. What seemed to be additions made by John, were in reality only the growth, the unfolding, of what that same Power Who was acting upon him, had caused to be proclaimed in those by-gone days. So the evangelist, in giving the words of John, began with "he said therefore," to show that those words were but the continuation of the ageless working of God.

There were three stages in the preparation for the coming of the Lord as described in the prophecy. The voice in the wilderness cried to people first of all to make ready the way of the Lord; then to make His paths straight according to the three directions given; and lastly it pro-

claimed, that all flesh should see the salvation of God. What John did in carrying out his God-given mission was to make that outline plainer, and thus show more clearly how the Lord would have His way prepared.

How the first part was to be done by those whom John represented is touched upon but lightly. Their work was to warn people, and get them to seek the baptism of repentance. Plain speaking marked that work. There was no glossing over the state of the sinner; no belittling the danger that hung over him. Their hearers were a race of vipers, treacherous, poisonous; and the danger coming down upon them was the wrath of God.

The bulk of what the evangelist quoted from John's preaching had to do with the second class of preparers, those whose work it was to see that the paths of the Lord were made straight. The paths of the Lord were three in number, according to John's teaching; repentance, obedience, and goodness: and the work of those who had charge of making them straight was to see that the people under their care brought forth fruits worthy of repentance; that they showed themselves to be true children of Abraham, not by their descent, but by hearkening to God's voice, and keeping all His laws, as that servant of God did; and lastly that, like fruit-bearing trees, they lived for the good of others. How those paths were to be made straight in the way the prophet had foretold, was shown by three examples drawn from the teaching of John. For the path of repentance, he took selfishness as an illustration; and made the fruit of its repentance to be giving to others, so that all would share alike, and, in the words of the prophecy, every valley be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low. The making of the crooked paths straight was illustrated by the outcast publicans with their crooked ways; John's instructions to them being, to extort no more than that which was appointed them. That was the path of obedience, the path which true children of Abraham trod. As for the

path of goodness, the path trodden by those whose feet have been guided into the way of peace, the straightening of that had been pictured in the prophecy by the rough ways being made smooth. The complete change of nature, in deeds, words, and heart which that betokened, was shown by John's instructions to the soldiers to do violence to no man; not to act like informers; and to be content with their pay.

The third mark by which the way of the Lord would be known was the salvation of God: that safety of His people which shows forth the glory of God. Those whose work it would be to make people see that safety, would act for Jesus as the King; as the evangelist pointed out in the short note about John which introduces this part of the section.

The people mentioned in that note are those whom John had baptized and taught. They are now being regarded as a definite body, and appear as such in every part of the description. They were showing, as a body, a mark which God's people have: for they were in expectation; looking for Him Who is the expectation of the nations: and, according to the plan of God, John was acting as their head. Individually, however, they all needed correction; for they were all reasoning in their hearts whether John himself might not be the Christ. What they were looking for was an earthly king; and John, by his baptism, having bound them together as his followers, they were wondering whether he would not take the next step, and declare himself to be Christ the King, the Head over all.

What the evangelist quoted from the answer of John showed Theophilus something of the position which, according to the plan of God, would be held by those who did this part of the work of preparation for the coming of the Lord. John was indeed their head as they had been reasoning Christ the King would be; for he had given them his baptism, and all that that implied was his. They were his people, enrolled by his baptism into one body; they were under his rule and guidance; he had charge over them, and

under his care they were beginning to learn what the safety of God's people is: but for all that he was merely acting as the subordinate of One Whose portrait is now given as furnished by him, speaking and acting by the word of the Lord.

The features of that portrait correspond with those which Gabriel described to the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation. His greatness was shown by the lowliness, compared with Him, of John the earthly head of the people. His title as the Son of the Most High, would be upheld by the baptisms He would give; and His kingship would show itself in the sifting and rewarding of His people. It was by the good tidings of His coming rule that John was encouraging the people; and why it was the crime of crimes of Herod to shut him up in prison was because that John, when he reproved him, was acting as an envoy of Him Who was to rule over the house of Jacob forever. Then, in all the people baptized, and Jesus also baptized, there was given a picture of Jesus and His kingdom; the unfailingness of which was assured by the voice from heaven declaring Him to be the Son of God.

It was by that divine acknowledgment of Jesus as the Son of God, that the Child was traced at manhood by His divine nature; but the carrying out by Jesus of all that the evangelist has outlined of the plan of God, helped also to show His divinity: for it was to prepare for His second coming, and was what John, by the word of God, had shown to be the way of preparing for the coming of the Lord.

Though not actually stated, the reference furnished for all this was plainly the Baptist records; by which, and by the state records, the accuracy of the statements made in the section could easily have been tested.

## c. 1.

## JESUS OF NAZARETH

## iii. 23-38. The genealogical table.

Every chapter closes with either confirming proofs, illustrations, or applications, as its subject may require. This one has two confirming proofs, which, following the arrangement in the body of the chapter, refer to Jesus, first as the Son of man, and then as the Son of God.

Confirming proofs are used to test a conclusion which has been reached. However sound the evidence may have been, and however clearly that conclusion may have followed from it, it is not accepted as a certainty, and accounted fit for use, until it has stood the severest test to which it can be subjected. The testing is done by means of these so-called confirming proofs. They are by nature destructive; and the way in which they confirm is by failing to overthrow. They are deductions made by an investigator who reasons thus: "If this conclusion is true, then such and such must be the case." It will readily be seen that if this is not found to be the case, the conclusion collapses; if, on the other hand, it is found to be so, the conclusion is confirmed, for it has stood the test. Confidence in a conclusion depends largely upon these confirming proofs; and when they are properly chosen, that confidence becomes unshakable. The share which they had in giving certainty to Theophilus was therefore very important.

The part of the chapter to which these two confirming proofs especially apply is the last section: more particularly its opening verse, which tells of Jesus' growth to manhood; and the closing verses about the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, and the declaration that He is the Son of God: but they also embrace the whole chapter, and confirm His identification with the Babe of Bethlehem Whose conception was announced by Gabriel, and Who was called at His circumcision, Jesus.

The first has to do with Him as the Son of man when He was about thirty years of age and beginning His public career; the question raised being whether Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee, were indeed that Child Who was born of the Virgin Mary at Bethlehem and brought up at Nazareth as Joseph's son.

The evidence, which the evangelist had given Theophilus in tracing the Child, was mainly what may be called public evidence: but the Jews of that time had also their own family records, and it was by means of those private records that the conclusion drawn from the public evidence was tested.

Our knowledge of the family life and ways of that time is slight; but from what we know about their customs, and the importance attached to the headship of a house, we can have little difficulty in understanding that if, when Joseph died, Jesus was not recognized as filling his place, all the proofs that had been given Theophilus about His birth and upbringing would have been worthless; for the right of the first-born would not have been His.

It was in answer then to this test, "If Jesus of Nazareth were born and brought up as described, then the family records will show that He succeeded Joseph as Head of the house," that the evangelist cited the genealogical table.

When once such tables have been started, they grow in length each generation by the addition of another name; and the drawing up of a new table merely consists in copying out the last one's pedigree, and adding his successor's name to it. The present table would thus be the one which Joseph had received, with Jesus' name added to it.

It was evidently well known at the time the treatise was written, who would have added Jesus' name to the table, on what occasion it would have been done, and for what purpose; so that the evangelist could content himself with giving the table, and merely adding the note "as was supposed," to show that it was not meant to be a proof of



Jesus' parentage, and that it in no wise clashed with what had been already said. In being thus sparing with words, he was only following a custom to which he has kept all through this treatise; just as in giving this table in the full, he was also following his custom about documentary evidence. By so doing he did not vouch for the ancestral accuracy of the whole list, but only certified Theophilus that the document was a faithful copy of the original of what would now be called Joseph's family tree, and that the name of Jesus was enrolled upon it in succession to him under the title of his son; thus showing that He inherited all the rights and duties of the first-born.

Although it is evident from the words of Gabriel in the Annunciation that Mary was also a descendant of David, no use whatever is made of that fact in this treatise. It was through Joseph, to whom she was betrothed, that Jesus inherited the title of the Son of David. In order to understand how this could be, and how it was that the evangelist by telling Theophilus about the divine Conception was making him absolutely sure that Jesus was the "Son of David," we must remember that the betrothal ceremony amongst the Jews of that time corresponded to the Christian marriage ceremony which takes place in the Church. At this marriage ceremony, the two have been made man and wife, and are truly married whether there is a wedding feast afterwards or not; whether there is a gathering to welcome them home, or not; whether they go home at once, or part at the church door never to meet again. So the Jewish betrothal made the two man and wife, although months might elapse before the bride was taken to her husband's home, and the wedding feast was held.

The fact that the betrothal of Mary and Joseph was expected to convince Theophilus that Jesus was the lawful heir to the title of the Son of David, throws a light upon the high scriptural view of marriage that he, and those whom he represented, held. That view is that children born

to those whom God has joined together are the gift of God; that it is He Who gives them, and He Who withholds them; that it is the Creator Who begets the child by means of the father, and forms it in the womb by means of the mother; and that it is the Creator Who, in due time, places it in the parents' care to be henceforth a member of their family. It was upon this great principle, which shone unobscured by an earthly father in the birth of Jesus, that the certainty of Theophilus about His right to the sonship of David rested. The Child was begotten directly by God the Holy Ghost, and was emphatically the gift of God to that married couple, a true member of their family.

c. 2.

THE CHRIST OF GOD.

iv. 1-13. The temptations in the wilderness.

By tracing the life of Jesus from the Incarnation to the time when He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and called the Son of God, the evangelist had led to the conclusion that He must be the Christ of God; but before making use of it he subjected it to a strange test. Like the former confirming proof, the test which he chose differed widely from the kind of evidence from which the conclusion had been drawn; for what it was based upon was the unceasing war which exists between good and evil. It was more especially upon that enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, which formed the first of the given marks by which the Christ would be known, that it bore: the argument being, that since hatred by the powers of evil was to be a mark of the Christ, if there were no such enmity against Jesus, He could not have been the Christ Who was to come and overthrow the power of the devil and rescue mankind. That test was satisfied by the temptations in the wilderness. They proved that that enmity did exist; that it burst forth as soon as ever Jesus, by the coming of the Holy Ghost, had been made the Christ; and that He

met the attack as being the Christ, full of the Holy Ghost; His answers being all in keeping with the indwelling of the Spirit.

Nothing is mentioned by which the statements now made by the evangelist could have been verified. It may have been that the account of those temptations formed part of the teaching of Jesus, and that witnesses were therefore plentiful who could vouch for them on the strength of His word; but, in any case, the important place which they fill as a confirming proof makes it certain that Theophilus must have been absolutely sure of the truth of what is related.

How much Satan knew about the divinity of our Lord we are not told. We know, however, that sin and wickedness darken the understanding about things good, and shut people out from God's presence and from the knowledge of His mysteries and ways; and as the devil is wholly evil, we may take it for granted that he is cut off altogether from the things of heaven, and knows nothing whatever of God's plans and doings, except what He has revealed in such a way that sin-stained man can understand. At that time, besides knowing what had been revealed in days gone by, he would have known that Jesus of Nazareth had received the down-pouring of the Holy Spirit, and thus been made the Christ, and that He had been declared by the voice from heaven to be His Son; and knowing that, he forthwith attacked Him. It was because this could not be otherwise, that the test which was made was so just and vital: that if Jesus of Nazareth were indeed the Christ of God, He would have been made a special object of attack by the devil.

The voice from heaven had called Jesus His Son. "God's Son" was also one of the titles of the Messiah, and it was with that meaning that Satan used the name. He attacked Him in connection with the three great parts of the work which the Christ would have to do as the Leader of God's people; namely, feeding them, leading them on to the con-

quest of the world, and teaching them the will of God. In meeting those attacks Jesus made no use of His own divine power, but only of the means which he afterwards put into the hands of His followers; that is, those which flow from the indwelling and guidance of the Holy Ghost, full of Whom He had returned from the Jordan. His weapon was the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; and the words which He quoted were those used by Moses the servant of God.

The time chosen for the great battle in the wilderness was the end of a forty day's fast: a time when the strength of a human frame would be at its lowest, and the balance of power between mind and body most easily upset; a time when thoughts suggested, or feelings roused, would readily get the upper hand, and imagination, owing to the loss of will-power, would sweep on unchecked.

It is not in their bareness, and branded with the devil's name, that temptations, arising from their God-given work, come to the servants of God; but in such plausible ways that it is often very hard to detect them. Satan came to Jesus, not in his hideous loathsomeness, but in a disguise suited to each occasion. The needs of Jesus were great, for He was famished by His fast; so the devil spoke as one full of sympathy, who was trying to point out a way of relief by reminding Him of His power as the Christ. "If thou be the Son of God command this stone that it become bread": for with the Messiahship went the power of the Holy Ghost, and He need therefore hunger no more. But commanding that stone to become bread would have made Him false to His trust; for it would have been using the power which had been given Him for supplying the needs of the people of God to satisfy the claims of His own body: or, to put it in another way, it would have been making a personal profit out of His ministry. With such a course Jesus would have nothing to do. It was a temptation of the devil.

The words with which He met the temptation, "man shall not live by bread alone," were drawn from those used by Moses in Deut. 8:3, when speaking to the people about manna, the bread which came down from heaven. What God had begun to do for His people under Moses, He would do to the full for them under the Prophet like unto Moses. Under Moses they had been miraculously fed by God: under the Christ they would also be miraculously fed, but by Himself as the Christ of God; and it was as the Giver of the Bread of heaven that He met and overcame that temptation.

Under Moses also the people of God had set out to conquer Canaan; under the Prophet like unto Moses they would set out to conquer the world: so the tempter next appeared as one clothed with all earthly power and glory. Evidently expecting the natural thirst for power and glory to be there, he sought to get Jesus to grasp at them for Himself. He set before Him, apparently in a vision, all the kingdoms of the world; and he did it in a moment of time, so that Jesus would be dazzled with their glory without having time to see behind the glitter. Then, claiming them as his own, he offered to give them all to Him, if He would do homage for them: if, in other words, He would recognize the claim of the evil one to lordship over them, and acknowledge the right of the spirit of worldliness to exist in His kingdom.

Again the gifts of the Spirit wisdom and understanding showed themselves in His answer drawn from the word of God: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." The words were adapted from those which Moses had used when safeguarding the people against a temptation which would assail them as the kingdoms of Canaan fell before them. The power, and glory, and wealth of those kingdoms would tempt them to forget God through Whom, and for Whose glory, they were conquering them; so he gave them a guiding rule, "Thou shalt

fear the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Deut. 6:13.

The scene of the next temptation was in Jerusalem, the spiritual home of the people of God, the city of which it had been foretold, that out of Zion would go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. To Jerusalem Jesus is pictured as having been led by the devil, and set on the pinnacle of the temple, the highest point over the house of God; in acknowledgement of His place as Head over all that the temple signified. Like as Moses, the servant of God, was the mouthpiece of God and His interpreter to the people, teaching them to know and understand the word of God, and to live it out in their lives, honouring, fearing, and serving Him, so would the Prophet like unto him be and do; and it was as the Teacher of God's people that Jesus was now tempted.

Fashioning himself as an angel of light, with the word of God on his lips, Satan tempted Him; and the form which his temptation took was that fruitful source of heresy and error, the specializing of a text. The Psalm from which the devil's quotation was made, is about the perfect safety of one who has made the Most High his refuge, and the Lord his hope; and his sureness of God's protection because he has known His name. Satan's suggested interpretation of it was that it applied specially to Jesus as being "the Son of God"; and that God's Chosen One should put into practice His faith in His promises and care, and cast Himself down, sure that He would be unharmed.

Plain as the promise was, the case was not so simple as it seemed. Something in the word of God that bore upon it was being left out; and that overlooked word Jesus recalled. His answer was drawn from Deut. 6:16, where Moses, referring to the way in which the children of Israel had put to the proof God's promises to be with them, said to them, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord as ye tempted Him in the temptation." All of the word of God which bore upon

a line of action had to be taken into account, and not merely a detached verse.

“When the devil had completed every temptation he departed from Him until a season.” These words form one of those reference notes which are found in this treatise, and prepared Theophilus for another notable attack by the devil. Till that time no further evidence from attacks by the devil would be recorded.

## CHAPTER B.

ST. LUKE IV. 14-39.

(a) iv. 14, 15. (b) 16-36. (c) 37-39.

(a)

iv. 14, 15. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and a fame went out concerning him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

(b). 1.

16-20. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

Wherefore he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:

He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind,

To set at liberty them that are bruised,

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

2.

20-22. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.

And all bare him witness. And they wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?



## 3.

23-30. And he said unto them, Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in thine own country. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is acceptable in his own country.

But of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.

And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things; and they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

## 4.

31, 32. And he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the sabbath day. And they were astonished at his teaching; for his word was with authority.

## 5.

33-36. And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil; and he cried out with a loud voice, Let alone! what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him down in the midst, he came out of him, having done him no hurt.

And amazement came upon all, and they spake together, one with another, saying. What is this word? for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

## (c). 1.

37. And there went forth a rumour concerning him into every place of the region round about.

## 2.

38, 39. And he rose up from the synagogue, and entered into the house of Simon. And Simon's wife's mother was holden with a great fever; and they besought him for her. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she rose up and ministered unto them.

## CHAPTER B. IV. 14-39.

### CHRIST

a. iv. 14, 15. b. 16-36. c. 37-39.

#### a.

iv. 14, 15. *Introduction.* To understand this treatise properly and especially this chapter, it must be borne in mind that it is about Jesus as He appeared upon earth, His glory, power, and majesty laid aside, the humble Man of Nazareth. To lose sight of the Man in any part of the treatise is to lose touch with it altogether. Every answer to the questions of such enquirers as Theophilus has to do with what the Man of Nazareth said or did; every person mentioned bears witness to something which is being proved about that Man of Nazareth. To Him, as to a centre, everything turns; giving to the mystery surrounding Him an ever growing clearness; until, at last, in Jesus of Nazareth, the solitary, the humble, there is seen shining out the glorious grandeur of the Son of God. It is as if the evangelist, when composing the treatise, had stood, in imagination, with Theophilus by his side, and before them the lowly form of Jesus; and as they stood gazing thereon, he began to tell him about Jesus and His work; unfolding and revealing, depth by depth, the wonders of His ministry: and as he spoke, the light of the divine nature of the Son of man grew brighter and ever brighter to his hearer, until, at last, overpowered, he bowed before Him as the Son of God.

But to the eye of man Jesus of Nazareth, to the day of His death, was Jesus of Nazareth still: so the evangelist, in

going back to this beginning of His ministry, has set Him before Theophilus just as He appeared to His fellow-townsmen at Nazareth; thus making the manhood of Jesus the starting point of this part of his proof. Indeed, in this chapter, he could not have done otherwise; for the chapter itself forms part of the proof of His divinity by showing that, in what He said and did, He was answering to that great description of the Christ which the Son of God alone could fill; and to make use of the divinity of Jesus in support of what he was proving would have been using a conclusion to prove itself.

It was to Jesus of Nazareth as the Servant of God entering upon the work which God had given Him to do, that the evangelist turned the eyes of Theophilus in order to prove to him that the instruction he had received was right: for Jesus, in doing it, had left an example for those to follow who would tread in His steps, and carry on that work, and Theophilus would therefore be sure that the course he had been taught to follow was the right one, when he knew that it was the course which Jesus Himself had taken.

He had already been shown that, before entering upon His work, Jesus was first baptized; receiving the same baptism which all the people then received. That baptism Jesus replaced by one of His own institution, which thus became the door through which all must pass before they can begin to follow Him as the Christ in the way in which Theophilus had been trained to do.

He had been shown too, in connection with the Baptism of Jesus, that great Pattern of the servants of God, that there was something which followed it, but which was distinct from it; namely, the down-coming of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit by Whose gifts and guidance work for God can alone be properly done. That down-coming, the evangelist pointed out to Theophilus, was accompanied by prayer and an outward, visible sign. People who would tread in the steps of Jesus which led to His service of God, must also,

after their Baptism, receive the Holy Ghost in the way by which His own Confirmation was replaced.

What Theophilus was now being shown was Jesus entering upon His work, having taken the next step in the example which He set as the Servant of God. That step was His Ordination, when He received the power of the Spirit; a step which all who would follow Him in His Christ-work have also to take. In just the same way as it was with His Baptism, the Ordination for doing any part of that work is that by which He replaced His own.

The evangelist did not content himself, however, with merely telling Theophilus that Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to do the work of the Christ. The things in which he had been instructed were so remarkable, that although traced back to the Man of Nazareth, their certainty could only be fully established by its being plainly proved that God Himself had given them to Jesus to do, and that God had also given Him the power and authority upon earth by which they were to be done. The proofs recorded are those which Jesus Himself gave. His was an unwitnessed Ordination; and by the example which He set by giving those proofs, He showed what ought to be required of anyone who claimed to have received an Ordination at which no human witnesses were present.

The subject of the chapter, and the material used in dealing with it, are pointed out in the list which, after the fashion of this treatise, heads the chapter. These lists are not arranged in columns; but are in the form of sentences, connected usually by means of "ands." In the present list we have three statements: the return of Jesus with the power of the Spirit into Galilee; the fame which went out concerning Him through all the region round about; and lastly His teaching in their synagogues, glorified of all.

Looking at this list of statements, we find that the scene of the chapter was to be laid in Galilee. It was to Galilee, the country from whence He had come to receive His com-

mission as the Christ, that Jesus returned from the wilderness with the power of the Spirit. He had already received the Holy Ghost at His Confirmation; so that what the evangelist was setting before Theophilus was, Jesus, anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, entering upon His work as the Christ.

There are certain marks by which the presence of the Holy Ghost in God's servants can be recognized. These marks are the special gifts which the Holy Spirit bestows in measures varying according to the service which the person is called to do for God. To Jesus of Nazareth was committed the whole of the work in God's kingdom, and those gifts were His in all their fulness; so that in Him all of the marks were plainly to be seen. What they were, the Holy Spirit Himself had made known through His spokesman in Isaiah 11:2, 3, where, in the Septuagint Version, they are given as the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and strength; the spirit of knowledge and reverence; and the spirit of the fear of God.

The power of the Spirit is a gift distinct from those seven-fold gifts. As its place of mention in this treatise points out, its bestowal takes place when the work which calls for it is given; when, in other words, the person is ordained. This power, the evangelist declared, Jesus had also received. The proof of these statements forms the bulk of the body of the chapter.

The second thing mentioned in the list is the report of Jesus and His doings which spread through all the region round about. This report is made use of in the account of the Nazareth happenings. It saved bringing in a mass of detail about His work as the Christ, and obscuring what the evangelist was doing in that part of his proof.

The last statement is, "He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." This showed that the teaching to which reference would be made in the chapter, was teaching given in definite places, the synagogues of Galilee. As such

places had their regular officers and attendants, it meant that Theophilus would be well supplied with witnesses able to vouch for what he was told took place at the meetings there. Any of the synagogues of Galilee in which Jesus taught would have answered the purpose; for, as the expression used points out, all the people connected with them had judged of Him and His teaching, and had formed an opinion of Him which was to His honour and glory.

We are now approaching the fulfilment of the prophecy which Zacharias, when testifying to the Incarnation, made about the office and work of the unborn Child. Beginning with the declaration that it was God Who had visited and wrought redemption for His people by the coming of the Child, he went on to tell the good news that the Child was the Horn of salvation that God had raised up in the house of David; and to declare Him to be the Messenger of salvation of Whom God had spoken unceasingly by the mouth of His holy prophets. Then he spoke of the work of the Child as the Channel of God's mercy, and the Messenger of His covenant; specially connected with which was God's oath to Abraham, the carrying out of which would mean freedom for His people, and holy, peaceful service. Thus Zacharias prophesied about the Child Whose conception Gabriel had announced; and the evangelist made firm the foundation which Theophilus was seeking, by showing that the prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus, and that He was sent by God to do all those things.

Neither Theophilus, nor anyone else, could have identified Jesus as the One Who was to be sent by God, unless he had had in his hands a God-given description of that Messenger, and had also been in a position to see clearly that Jesus answered to it: facts which the evangelist evidently kept in view when making choice of people to whom Theophilus could go for first-hand information about Jesus; for those whom he chose were, of all men, the best able to tell about the change which had come over the Carpenter of

Nazareth, seeing that they were members of the synagogue at Nazareth, where He had been brought up, or else of that at Capernaum, His own city.

A peculiar feature of the plan which the evangelist has followed in this treatise may be noted here; and that is, the way in which he has made the closing parts of one chapter lead up to the opening parts of another, and thus help to explain them. For instance, the first of the confirming proofs of the last chapter was about Jesus at the beginning of His ministry; the first section of this chapter is about the door of entrance into that ministry. In the second confirming proof Jesus showed by His use of the Scriptures that He had the spirit of wisdom and understanding: in the second section of this chapter He showed by His discourse upon the Scriptures that He had the spirit of wisdom and understanding.

*Summary.* The proof that Jesus was ordained by God with authority and power to do the three parts of the work of the Christ is spread over the whole treatise, for it was by His words, and work, and ways that it was established; so that it is merely an outline that the evangelist has given Theophilus in this chapter. Beginning with the prophetic description of the Christ in which, on account of His having the Spirit of the Lord upon Him, He was ordained to do certain things, he has gone on to show the kind of proof which Jesus gave that He Himself was the One upon Whom the Spirit of the Lord was, and that the power of the Spirit, by which alone those things could be done, was also His.

It was by the presence of the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit that the presence of the Spirit of the Lord was proved.

That the spirit of wisdom and understanding was His, as well as the work of preaching the gospel to the poor, was shown by the wonderful speaking of Jesus; speaking such as that which astounded the people of Nazareth in their



synagogue that day: and evidence that He had the spirit of counsel and strength was given by Him in the same synagogue when He claimed the second part of the Christ-work as His.

It was by His teaching in connection with the last part of that work, the acceptable year of the Lord, that He showed so plainly that He had the spirit of knowledge and reverence; for an example of which, as well as for His exercise of authority to speak in God's name and for Him, Theophilus was referred to the synagogue at Capernaum. To members of the same synagogue he was also referred for evidence that Jesus had the spirit of God's holy fear; and likewise the authority and power necessary for accomplishing that work of deliverance.

The two confirming proofs which close the chapter tested the conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth had the power of the Spirit, and authority to use it. They are the report which spread all around; and the doing of one of those special acts of divine power called miracles.

#### b. 1.

##### THE DESCRIPTION OF THE CHRIST

St. Luke i. 68. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and wrought redemption for His people.

St. Luke iv. 18. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.

Isaiah xi. 1, 2. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a sprout shall come up from his root; and the Spirit of God shall rest upon him.

St. Luke iv. 16-20. The reading in the synagogue.

The fame of Jesus had spread through all the region round about; and news of His wonderful preaching and teaching, and of the marvellous things that He was doing, had reached Nazareth, the place where He had been brought up. The people of Nazareth would naturally have puzzled over the sudden change which had come over the young Carpenter Who had grown up in their midst; and would

have wanted to know how it was that He had, all at once, become able to do such mighty works. They ought indeed to have been well fitted for conducting such an investigation; for, knowing so well what He was like when He left home but a short time before, they could have compared Him with what He had been, and have seen what the difference was which had made of that obscure Carpenter, a Prophet of renown. What that difference was, Theophilus also wanted to know; for then he would have had an answer to the enquiries he was making into the commission of Jesus of Nazareth, as to how He had come by that work which He had treated as His own, and what the power was by which He had done it. So the evangelist made him take his place amongst the citizens of Nazareth, who were thronging the synagogue that sabbath day, sure that they would see Jesus there.

True to His custom, He came: and, as if to meet their wishes, stood up to read. What He read must have startled those who had come to unravel the mystery of the change; for it was the great description by which the Christ was to be identified. The place which He found was Isaiah 61, one of those prophecies which gradually built up the portrait of that mysterious Being who was to come; but He did not confine Himself to that chapter; for amongst the quotations from His reading that day, there is one from Isaiah 58:6, taken from the directions given to the prophet who was to be a repairer of breaches, and make the people acceptable to God. These quotations the evangelist arranged so as to make them fit in with the plan he had laid down for the treatise.

The work of that Servant of God, as described in those quotations, was divided into two main parts: what he was anointed to do; and what he was sent to do. He was, indeed, anointed to do it all, and sent to do it all; but the preaching of the gospel was peculiarly his as the Anointed One, or the Christ, upon whom the Holy Ghost had been

outpoured. The rest of the work was his as the representative whom God had sent with the power of the Spirit to speak in His name. What he was sent to do was also divided into two parts; so that there were three distinct commissions in that which Jesus claimed as His own. The first part of what that Servant of God was sent to do consisted of three things to be done personally to the people: captives were to have their release proclaimed to them, the blind the recovering of their sight, and the bruised were to be set at liberty. The last part of what he was sent to do was to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

This acceptable year of the Lord was prefigured by the year of jubilee; the year when all who were in bondage of any sort were set free to return to their inheritance, and enabled to live as God had meant them to live. It thus stood for the perfect state of life in the kingdom of God. The happy state which marked the year of jubilee was brought about by things being done for the people which corresponded with the various parts of the work mentioned in the prophecy; but eager as the workers would have been to do them, they had neither the authority nor the power until the proclamation of the coming in of the year gave it them. So it would be with those who prepared for the acceptable year of the Lord. The commission to proclaim that acceptable year would belong to that Servant of God as the Head of the people of God, as Christ the King; and His it would be to give the necessary authority and power for doing those other works of the Christ which prepared for that acceptable year. The proclamation of the year of jubilee was made on the day of atonement: the proclamation of the acceptable year of the Lord giving authority and power to the workers would therefore be made on a day corresponding to that day of atonement for the whole race.

The previous chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah had declared what God had promised to do for His people; how He would gather them together, and give them salva-

tion, everlasting light, and righteousness; promises which were sealed by the words, "I, the Lord, will gather them in due time" (Sep. Ver.). Then followed the description, which Jesus read, of the servant whom God would use for carry-out those promises. Only one such servant was spoken of; only one who would be entrusted with the ingathering of the people of God, anointed and sent by God to do His will, and able to speak as the voice of God. One, and only one, would do all this; and when he came, he would be known by God-given signs: he would come in due season; the Spirit of the Lord would be upon him; he would be anointed to make known the good tidings to the poor; he would be sent to proclaim release to captives and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised; and sent also to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

From the way in which the evangelist, in this very condensed chapter, spends words in recording such simple things as the opening and closing of a book, it would seem that our Lord was using a method which was afterwards very common with Him, and was teaching them by His actions. They wanted to know about Him and His ministry: He opened the word of God; it was that which testified of Him. He rolled up the book, and gave it again to the attendant: the prophetic part was ended; the future had become the present, for He, Who was prophesied about, had come. The Lord God of Israel had visited and wrought redemption for His people.

## b. 2.

THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING.—

ANointed TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

*Description.* St.Luke i. 69-71. And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David (as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have

been since the world began), salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.

St. Luke iv. 18. He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor.

Isaiah xi. 2. The spirit of wisdom and understanding shall fill him.

*Fulfilment.* St. Luke iv. 22. The words of grace.

In dealing with the enquiries of Theophilus, the evangelist began with the question, Who is Jesus? and then, using the answer as a foundation, went on to build up, stage by stage, the framework of the things in which he had been instructed; so that he, or any one else who had received the same instruction and wanted to know the certainty of it, might have the whole matter clearly and connectedly before him. The present stage is the commission of Jesus. That commission had a number of clearly defined branches, upon each of which he has built. As each part of it helped to give certainty to Theophilus about one of the things in which he had been instructed, when we know what any part of the commission of Jesus was, we can form some idea of what it was that was founded upon it about which Theophilus was enquiring.

It is clear that in proving an ordination where there were no human witnesses, and the ordainer was God, there is only one person in the world who can give direct evidence; and that is the man himself. The evidence which other people can give has chiefly to do with testifying that the person had claimed from the outset to have been thus ordained, and that the proofs, which he had offered in support of his ordination, were genuine.

It is this which makes the evangelist's short quotation, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears," of such great importance. There in the house of God, in the place where He had joined from childhood in their sabbath worship, and in the presence of those who had known Him from His infancy, Jesus solemnly declared that He was the

one foretold; that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, and that He was anointed and sent by God to do the work described.

There were many witnesses who could have confirmed the evangelist's statement that Jesus had made this remarkable claim. Any of the congregation in the synagogue of Nazareth that day could have done it, for the claim was publicly made; and to any of them Theophilus could have gone, for all were bearing witness to Him: but those to whom he would have gone, as a matter of course, were the regular officials who had charge of the synagogue, and were responsible for its services. And to them, we may safely say, he was referred; for in a work like this, mentioning a synagogue by name would be equivalent to giving its officials as references for the truth of statements made about things which took place in it.

As for the proofs He would be expected to give, the line which they would have to follow had been made known long before in the prophecy which He read to the people: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, on account of which He anointed me," etc. An essential condition was the presence of the Spirit of the Lord, and by that token the ordained one would be known. Whoever claimed to have received that Ordination would have to show that the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. When he had done that, no further proof would be needed, except that the power by which the work was done was his; for his commission was to be the direct consequence of his having that Spirit. Seeing that there was only one who was to have the Spirit of the Lord as his own, and that one the Christ, it was enough for Jesus to prove that He had the Spirit of the Lord to prove that He was the Christ.

That the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, He proved by showing that He had the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit. To have given those proofs in the full would have destroyed the clearness of the chapter,

so the evangelist confined himself to sample cases; definite occasions when Jesus was doing the work by which the presence of those gifts and power was shown. The gifts he has taken in their order as they are given in Isaiah 11:2, 3 (Sep. Ver.).

The first pair is the spirit of wisdom and understanding; those which Jesus used in the wilderness, and which are especially required for such work as knowing and applying the word of God. Abundant evidence of their presence in Him was to be found in His preaching of the gospel. The occasion chosen as a sample case was when He preached in the synagogue at Nazareth before known witnesses, telling them how the word of God which He had read applied to Himself, and that He was the promised Saviour, the horn of salvation in the house of David about whom the prophets had spoken. To those witnesses Theophilus could have gone and enquired about what they had seen remarkable in His preaching, and what conclusion they had formed about it.

No one can become filled with the gifts of the Spirit without there being a noticeable change in him; and Theophilus had to know whether those people of Nazareth had seen any difference in their fellow-townsmen; and if so, what it was. They were well fitted to detect any change in Him as He sat there with their eyes all fastened upon Him; for He had grown up in their midst, and the recollection of what He was when He left Nazareth but a short time before, was still fresh in their minds. The difference startled them. The voice of Jesus must always have been pleasant to the ear, and His words sweet with His love; but now there was a wondrous beauty about them which astounded His hearers: a beauty which ever afterwards clothed the words of Him Who spake as never yet man spake. Words of grace they were, full of the beauty of salvation; tokens of the spirit of wisdom and understanding. So plainly were

His marvellous words the fruit of the Spirit of the Lord, that they exclaimed, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

Joseph was of the house and lineage of David, and held the title of the Son of David. It was through the Virgin Mary that Jesus was a son of David according to the flesh, "a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a sprout come up from his root"; but it was as Joseph's heir that He had succeeded to the title of Son of David. Their exclamation showed that His words of grace reminded them of the prophecy of Isaiah, and that they saw in them a sign of its fulfilment; for the possession of the spirit of wisdom and understanding was being shown by One, Who, they knew, was the Son of David.

By telling him this, the evangelist not only furnished Theophilus with the proof that Jesus of Nazareth had those gifts of the Spirit, but also established the fact, for use later on, that He filled the first part of the office of the Christ by doing the work described in the prophecy as preaching the gospel to the poor.

It may be remarked here, that as it was for preaching the gospel that the one in the prophecy was particularly anointed, it was that work which specially went with His title of Jesus Christ.

### b. 3.

THE SPIRIT OF COUNSEL AND STRENGTH—SENT AS THE PROPHET

*Description.* St. Luke i. 72. To show mercy towards our fathers.

St. Luke iv. 18. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

Isaiah xi. 2. The spirit of counsel and strength shall fill him.

*Fulfilment.* St. Luke iv. 23-30. The riot in the synagogue.

The next token by which the presence of the Spirit of the Lord would be known was the spirit of counsel and



strength; those two gifts of the Spirit which showed themselves so plainly in Jesus' dealings with men. As a sample of the evidence which abounded for them, the evangelist chose the way in which He dealt that day with the people of Nazareth, when they were looking for Him to give them proofs of His being the Prophet like unto Moses. By the choice which he made he was able, as before, both to point out to Theophilus another set of proofs that Jesus was the Christ, and also, by setting before him the second part of the commission of Jesus and its three lines of work, to prepare him for another part of the framework that he was building up.

Those to whom Moses spoke of the coming of the Prophet like unto himself, had already been led by him out of the house of bondage, and baptized unto him in the cloud and in the sea; and were being trained by him to live, and serve God, as His people should do. That work of training was divided into three parts: getting them released from punishment for the sins into which they fell; teaching them to walk in the laws of God; and helping them to overcome the infirmities which so often beset them, and made them fall: or, in the symbolism of the prophecy which Jesus read, getting release for captives, recovering the sight of the blind, and setting at liberty them that were bruised; the first part of the Christ-work which He had claimed to be sent to do. In that work was fulfilled the prophecy of Zacharias about the unborn Child, that through Him God would show mercy towards our fathers; for the lives of fathers were regarded as being continued in their children, the children suffering the consequences of their fathers' faults.

Very little is given of all that Jesus said in the synagogue at Nazareth that day; but His use of the saying, "Physician, heal thyself," would have been enough to show Theophilus that He took to Himself the title of Physician of souls. His work as the Physician was the first of those three parts of Moses' work; that which Moses did when the

people fell into sin, and he obtained their release from it and its fruits by standing in the breach between them and God, interceding for them, and bringing back their pardon. Wonderful deeds, bearing upon His claim to do this part of the work of the Christ and set captives of Satan free, had been done by Him at Capernaum; but about them Theophilus was not told. They were merely put on record; the brief mention of them being as much as to say, that this part of Jesus' claim was fully upheld, but that the evidence for it had been put off for a while; He having refused to do any of those works at Nazareth.

In the other saying, "No prophet is acceptable in his own country," He was plainly referring to Himself as the Prophet sent by God; the kind of work that He claimed to be sent to do, and the class of people to whom He was sent, being made clear by what He told them about the two other prophets.

The first was Elijah. It was in connection with the famine that was over all the land in the days of Ahab, that Elijah was sent to do that which illustrated this part of the work of the Christ. The famine was God's warning to His people that they were not keeping His laws; the pressure by which He was seeking to turn them back to the way of righteousness. Widows, in their poverty and helplessness, would have felt that pressure to the full, and ought to have been the most ready to give heed to Him, and be turned to the light: but of all those upon whom the famine fell, His prophet was acceptable to none but the foreigner of Sarepta. All the starving widows of Israel were therefore passed by; and to her alone God's messenger was sent to teach the way of life. He did his work by telling her what God's will was, and encouraging her to obey by assuring her that, in obeying, she would find life. To people of the type of the widow of Sarepta, Jesus was sent as the Prophet to make known the way of life by teaching them the will of God, and getting them to do it.

There were many lepers in the time of Elisha, the prophet chosen by Jesus to illustrate the rest of this work of the Christ as the Prophet; but to none of the lepers of Israel was that prophet acceptable. None sought him, so none were healed. The only one healed was Naaman the Syrian; the man mighty in strength, valiant, noble, and great, whose life was ruined by a single blemish which he could not get rid of; a spot of leprosy. That man, the type of people beset with an infirmity from which they cannot break free, sought healing of the prophet, and found it; for to him the prophet was acceptable.

Such was the information about Himself that Jesus saw fit to give them. As for the mighty works they had hoped to see; like as He would do none to show them that He was indeed the Physician of souls, so He would do none to show what was meant by the recovering of sight of the blind, or setting at liberty them that are bruised, because He was not acceptable to them.

The fierce storm of rage which broke the stillness of that sabbath day was so startling, that the scene could never have been forgotten by any who were there; especially the rulers of the synagogue, the men responsible for its order. The shock which such an outbreak must have given them, would have made them invaluable as references for all that then took place. The sudden change from breathless silence to the turmoil of angry men, would have fixed the fact firmly in their memories, that, in spite of the people's expectations, Jesus had refused to repeat the signs which He had given at Capernaum, and had also compared them unfavourably with Gentiles. The scandal of the murderous attack, begun in the place of worship itself; the dread of a tragic end, as the congregation rushed out of the building dragging their Victim along to the brow of the hill; and then the sudden relief at the strange failure of their mad rage; all made a contrast so striking, that those rulers of the synagogue could never have forgotten the sight of Jesus

calmly passing through the midst of that fierce mass of angry men and going His way, or the events which had led up to it.

It was the spirit of counsel and strength that was showing itself in the Man of Nazareth that day. The expectation and the clamour of men had no influence over Him; neither could the threat of death move Him: for he who is sent by God with that gift of the Spirit does nothing at the dictation of men. Quietly and firmly He decided where He would work, and what He would do; and none could sway Him.

b. 4.

THE SPIRIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND REVERENCE.—WITH AUTHORITY  
TO TEACH

*Description.* St. Luke i. 72. To remember His holy covenant.

St. Luke iv. 19. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Isaiah xi. 2. The spirit of knowledge and reverence shall fill him.

*Fulfilment.* St. Luke iv. 31, 32. Jesus teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

The evidence for the remaining gifts of the Spirit is drawn from the carrying out of the last part of the Christ-work, the proclaiming of the acceptable year of the Lord. The free and happy state of life proclaimed was that described in Jer. 38: 33, 34 (Sep. Ver.) as God's new covenant which, according to Zacharias, was to be remembered through the unborn Child. It had four parts: God's laws would be put in people's minds, and written in their hearts; He would be their God, and they would be His people; they would all know the Lord; He would be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins He would remember no more. Such was the state of life which Jesus proclaimed; and by His teaching people were freed: freed from worldly-minded-

ness which closed their hearts against the laws of God ; from the bondage of error which kept them from being God's true people ; from that ignorance of His ways which made them a prey to fear and forebodings ; from the lack of understanding of the Atonement which shut out the peace and happiness of God's mercy : for from His words they learned the truth, the truth which makes people free. It was such teaching as that which furnished evidence for the presence of the spirit of knowledge and reverence ; for it is by the spirit of knowledge that the things of God are learned, and by the spirit of reverence that they are duly received and spoken about.

There was no need for quotations from the teaching of Jesus to show His deep insight into the will of God, and His equally deep reverence in speaking about it : those tokens of the spirit of knowledge and reverence were so invariably present in it, that the evangelist had only to tell Theophilus that Jesus was teaching.

At the same time that he did this he advanced the framework of the instruction which Theophilus had received yet another step. As already said, each part of the commission of Jesus formed the foundation for a definite part of that instruction ; and it was as being one of those foundations that Theophilus was shown Jesus doing the work which belonged to this part of His commission, and exercising the authority and power which went with it.

The place, he was told, where this sample of Jesus' teaching was given, was Capernaum, where He was so well known : the Capernaum which was a city of Galilee. The part of the city was the synagogue ; the time, the sabbath day. The mention of the sabbath did more, however, than fix the time. It connected the doings at Capernaum with the reading and the claim made on a like day in the synagogue at Nazareth, and showed that the proof of that claim was still going on. The references, as before, were the officials and members of the synagogue.

A commission such as that which Jesus claimed to have received, carried with it the authority for doing the work which it covered; so that there was no need for special proof that it had been given Him. All that had to be done was to show that He had made use of that authority in doing the work; and this the evangelist has done in connection with its highest part, proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord.

"They were astonished at His teaching; for His word was with authority." What surprised them was the difference between His teaching and that of others. Those other teachers all needed something besides their own word on which to rest anything they ventured to say. They expected it to be received, not because it was they who had said it, but because it was based upon the Scriptures, or upon the opinions of men of recognized greatness: whereas Jesus not only made His interpretations and applications of the will of God binding upon men because it was He Who had given them, but also laid down the law of Himself and without appeal. This or that had to be done, or not done, because He had said that it was; the law of God was to be interpreted and received in such and such a way, because it was He Who had said so, and what He said none could alter; the unseen things were what He declared them to be, because He knew about them. The exercise of this authority can be recognized in all the teaching of Jesus. His words are the words of One Who has perfect knowledge of all things, past, present, and future; He speaks for God, and as God, in words solemn, reverent, divine.

## b. 5.

THE SPIRIT OF THE FEAR OF GOD.—AUTHORITY AND POWER  
TO SET FREE

*Description.* St. Luke i. 73-75. The oath which He swore unto Abraham our father, to grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies should serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

St. Luke iv. 19. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Isaiah xi. 3. The spirit of the fear of God.

*Fulfilment.* St. Luke iv. 33-36. Freeing a man from an unclean devil.

For the proclamation of the year of jubilee to have been effectual for the freeing of the bound, it must have been backed by power to enforce it, and make those in possession let go their hold; and, in like manner, power had also to accompany the proclamation of the acceptable year of the Lord to make it effective. It was to this supporting force that Zacharias had referred in the closing part of his prophecy about the unborn Child, when he spoke of God's oath to Abraham as enabling His covenant to bear its due fruit in holy and righteous service:—the oath that his seed should inherit the cities of their enemies (Gen. 22:17). What was to be understood by the dwelling-places of their foes becoming the property of the people of God, and what the power was by which those foes were to be driven out, was shown by the case which the evangelist selected for assuring Theophilus about the Ordination of Jesus to do the work of the Christ.

To give him the certainty that he sought, it had not only to be shown that Jesus had the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit, but that He had the power of the Spirit as well. What the possession of the sevenfold gifts showed was, that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, and that He was the Christ

Who would be ordained to do that work; but for the Ordination itself, His possession of the power of the Spirit had to be proved. The reason was, that it was by the power of the Spirit that the work was to be done: the gift of it accompanied the giving of the work, and formed an essential part of the Ordination. It is given in varying degrees according to the work assigned; and as the whole of the work was given to Jesus, and He was to be the Fountain-Head of that power, it had to be His in all its fulness. That is why the evangelist, when showing Theophilus that Jesus had the last remaining gift of the Holy Ghost, the spirit of the fear of God, went on to show that He also had the power of the Spirit, and did it in connection with the last and highest part of the Christ-work, proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord: for all the rest of the work being covered by this, power to do it meant power to do all and every part of the work.

The scene in which this was done, is a continuation of that in which Jesus was teaching the people: for the object of that teaching was to deliver people from their bonds and enable them to live as they ought, walking in the way of the Lord. Isaiah, in chapter two, speaks about the work of enabling people to walk in the light of the Lord. The most striking feature of the account is the terror of evil-doers fleeing "from the presence of the fear of God, and from the glory of His strength, when He shall arise to shake terribly the earth" (Sep. Ver.): and it is an instance of that terror that the evangelist has now given.

Amongst those who were listening to Jesus was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean devil, and unable to break away from it. It was an extreme case, and was, of course, chosen by the evangelist for that very reason: for what Jesus was able to do for a person in such a state as that man was, He was able to do for all who were under the bondage of evil in any form or degree whatsoever; under any influence not of the spotless purity of the kingdom of



God, or habits of any sort which kept them from being wholly God's.

As the man felt the presence of Jesus, an awful fear came over him. "Let alone!" he cried; "What have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God."

A "holy" person is one set apart, consecrated to the service of God. All first-born children, who were males, were holy to the Lord: but there was one to whom, above all, the title of the Holy One of God would belong; and that was the Son of David, Who was to have the power of God, and subdue all His people's foes. He was to be filled with the spirit of holiness, or as it is called in the prophecy, the spirit of the fear of God: that gift of the Spirit by which evil is shut out, and people do that which is good; giving themselves wholly to God, walking in His ways, and doing His will.

It was by the presence of the spirit of the fear of God in Jesus, that the man with the spirit of the unclean devil recognized Him as the Holy One of God. There could be nothing in common between one in whom an unclean spirit had made its home, and one in whom was the spirit of the fear of God. There could be no peace between them; nothing but the war which unceasingly goes on between good and evil, a war in which evil must finally fail: and the man, clinging to his chains, was afraid that the foulness, which had become part of his being, would be swept away, and life, as he knew it, destroyed. So the stillness of the sabbath was broken by the wild shouts of a wretched being, carried away by his own fears, and the fears of the unclean spirit which possessed him; and the people knew by those dreadful cries, that he had found himself in the presence of One in Whom was the spirit of the fear of God and the glory of His strength.

What followed showed them plainly that Jesus had the power of the Spirit and authority to use it, and that the

Son of David was able to subdue all the foes of the people of God: for they saw the foul mouth silenced; the victim of evil set free. The struggle to escape was desperate. The evil spirit hurled the man into the midst of the people, as if trying to hide from the presence of the fear of God and from the glory of His strength: but the power with Jesus prevailed, shielding the man from harm, and freeing him from the evil influence to which he had yielded.

The work of moulding anew the lives of men, changing them so thoroughly that, from being given to evil ways, they become wholly God's, requires a power which is not of man. The power which overcomes the mightiest efforts of evil, and sets its victims free, which alone makes men holy, is the power of the Holy Ghost; the power with which Jesus returned into Galilee: and it was by such works as the healing of this man, that He gave evidence that He had that power, and authority to use it.

The references, as before, were the officials of the synagogue at Capernaum.

### B. c. 1.

#### AUTHORITY AND POWER TO SET FREE

##### iv. 37. The report which spread.

It was the work of the Christ Who was to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, that Jesus had done in Capernaum. In doing it He had spoken with authority, and had shown by the instruction that He gave, and the power that He used, that He was able to set God's people free. To confirm what he had said to Theophilus about this, the evangelist told him of the report concerning Jesus, which went forth into every place of the region round about. The test which was made was somewhat as follows: If Jesus of Nazareth had acted as having authority from God, and had begun to bring in the acceptable year of the Lord as described, the startling news would have spread; wherefore if the

people around Capernaum did not know about it, no such things had been done there.

It was a wide-spread choice which the evangelist gave his readers. Anywhere in the surrounding country, wherever they liked to enquire, they would find the verdict of the people of Capernaum well known, and also the events upon which they had based it. The sound of it had gone forth into all the country round about; and whoever took the trouble to trace the report back from the various places to which it had spread, would find that those traces all centered in the synagogue at Capernaum, and were but a repetition of the verdict about His teaching, and of that about His power which was summed up in those words of astonishment, "With authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits and they come out."

For this test to have had the value and weight which such an important confirming test should have, it must have been offered to the readers of the treatise within a very limited time after the event had taken place; whilst it was still a living topic, and still regarded as something strange and marvellous.

### c. 2.

#### THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

##### iv. 38, 39. The healing of Simon's wife's mother.

The conclusion drawn from that last scene in the synagogue at Capernaum was, that Jesus of Nazareth had the power of the Spirit. That conclusion had now to be tested; and tested in such a way as to convince a man, like Theophilus, who believed that God is the Maker and Controller of all things, whether material or non-material. Seeing that the evidence upon which the conclusion rested had been drawn from the non-material world, the most satisfactory test was one which had to do with the material world; for that would bring in the most widely different conditions. It would, moreover, be better suited for calm, deliberate ob-

servation; the state of affairs, before and after, could be more accurately ascertained; and the natural forces at work being well-known, the presence of a new force could clearly and easily be recognized.

The test that was made evidently took some such form as this: "If it were indeed the power of the Spirit which Jesus of Nazareth had, He would have been able also to override and change the laws of nature in the material world"; for, in answer, the evangelist has brought forward a case chosen, not from the spiritual world, but from the physical. That deed was the healing of Simon's wife's mother of a great fever.

It was one of those works of Jesus commonly called miracles:—super-natural deeds: that is, cases in which the course of nature from cause to effect was departed from; a cause ceasing to have its due effect, or an effect being brought about without its "natural" cause existing.

It could have been no easy task to convince fully educated men of the non-Jewish world of that time about the occurrence of miracles: for the evolutionary theory of the formation of the universe had held sway for centuries, and that theory, as it was usually held, recognized the existence of no power capable of changing what is known as the course of nature. Such people must have found miracles a very serious bar to their acceptance of Christianity: but in this treatise not the slightest attempt is made to take away that bar by explaining the deeds so as not to clash with the science teaching of that day. They are treated all through as being supernatural; changes of state which existing natural causes could not bring about; breaks in the sequence of evolution. Nothing is said about their being super-human; for to such people the supernatural was also super-human: for, according to the evolutionary theory, it was impossible for man to do anything supernatural, for the simple reason that he himself was part of the natural order of things. Even if the whole force of nature were concen-

trated in a man, and he had all the knowledge which it would ever be possible for human beings to acquire; the supposition that he could do anything supernatural would have been as absurd to those who held that theory, as supposing that something could be greater than itself, that a force could be stronger than itself. A supernatural event could only be brought about by some power which was not included in what was known as nature; a power which was of necessity, mightier than that which it set aside. And the evangelist has taken for granted that his readers would agree with him, that the power which is above nature, is the power of God Himself.

Whoever sets himself to prove that someone had had the power to work "miracles," has to do two things: he not only has to cite an authentic case of the use of that power, but he has also to convince people that what was done was a supernatural deed. A single supernatural event, of any kind whatever, is enough to establish the possibility of such occurrences, and to show that the person who did it must have had the power of God; but to convince mankind generally, the event chosen has to be such that all thoughtful people will be sure to regard it as a physical impossibility. An event which one man deems impossible, another may look upon as simple and easy; so that different standards of impossibility have to be taken into account: The evangelist has therefore made a selection from the works which Jesus did, with a range sufficient to meet the views of all. Amongst those which he has chosen are this healing of the fever-stricken woman, the draught of fishes, the raising of Jairus' daughter, and the feeding of the five thousand. Great as was the natural improbability that any of those things could have been done as described, he chose none of them for his sample case. There was one more wildly improbable still. All those were claimed to have been done by a living man; this one, by a dead man. A dead person restoring himself to life was the height of improbability;

a thing which all intelligent men would have held to be utterly impossible: and that is the case which the evangelist chose for convincing his readers of the supernatural power which Jesus had, and is the only case into the details of which he has gone.

The way in which he sought to convince his readers that the aforesaid deeds were done, was not by using arguments, but by offering evidence. The amount of evidence that he offered was in keeping with the rule that "the more improbable a supposed occurrence, the more cogent ought to be the evidence in its favour"; and we find that as the unlikelihood increased, he gave Theophilus fuller details, and more people for references. The kind of evidence that he gave, was that which alone suits such an investigation; the evidence of eye-witnesses: and his accounts of the events consist of bare, unvarnished statements, with the names of people who could vouch for them. Circumstantial evidence, of course, comes in at times; as, for instance, the report which spread about Jesus' doings in Capernaum: but, otherwise, all hearsay evidence has been ruled out; and in the account of each of the miracles quoted above only those people are referred to who were there at the time, and had ample means for making their observations of it. They are referred to, either by their names being given, or else such a description of them that Theophilus, or any other enquirer of that date, would have had no difficulty in finding them, and getting all the particulars at first hand.

In each of those miracles there were three things to which the evangelist drew the attention of his readers: the state of the case before Jesus spoke; the word or action of Jesus; and the state of the case afterwards. However much the conditions might vary in different miracles, there was, in the midst of the diversity, one constant element—the word or action of Jesus. Until that word was uttered or the act performed, no change took place: the impossible remained impossible still. When Jesus spoke, a change in-

variably followed His word, and in accordance with it. The evangelist has assumed that the only inference which his readers could possibly draw, was, that with the word of Jesus there went a power which was superior to the forces of nature; and that that power was the power of God.

With regard to the healing of the fever-stricken woman, he said quite enough to enable any contemporary to make his own researches into the genuineness of the deed. He gave his readers a summary of the conditions both before and after the cure, as well as the time and place for locating it; and what is more important still he gave them references, Simon and his family, eye-witnesses to whom they could go, and investigate it in every detail. And this he did, confident that the result of the enquiries would be to bear out what he himself had found to be the case: that a strange change had taken place in the woman; that from being bed-ridden, and in a very high fever, she had suddenly become free from the fever, and free from its effects as well; that she had set to work at once ministering to Jesus, and to those who were with Him; and that this change had only taken place at the word of Jesus.

As might be expected from the way in which these referenced miracles are scattered throughout the treatise, the proof of the supernatural is not the only use which the evangelist has made of them. Connected with this miracle, for instance, is the fact that when Jesus freed the woman from the fever which had held her, she at once arose and began ministering to Him and to those who were with Him. She was the first of that body of Ministering Women, or Deaconesses, who show their love to their Saviour by devoting themselves to His service; and this miracle not only marked the beginning of that order, but also furnished the type of those who were to compose it: women who know from experience the power and goodness of Jesus, having been freed by Him from some affliction which had come upon them; women whose hearts are filled with gratitude and love; who,

having received from Jesus strength in their weakness, show forth their love by gratefully using His gifts for Himself, and ministering to Him and to His people. Raised from the fever of earthly pursuits, they enter the calm service of Jesus.



## CHAPTER C.

ST. LUKE IV. 40.—VI. 11.

(a). iv. 40-44. (b). v. 1-39. (c). vi. 1-11.

(a).

iv. 40-44. And when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And devils also came out from many, crying out, and saying, Thou art the Son of God. And rebuking them, he suffered them not to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

And when it was day, he came out and went into a desert place: and the multitudes sought after him, and came unto him, and would have stayed him, that he should not go from them. But he said unto them, I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent.

And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judæa.

(b). 1.

v. 1-11. Now it came to pass, while the multitude pressed upon him and heard the word of God, that he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; and he saw two boats standing by the lake: but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the multitudes out of the boat.

And when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon. Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answered and said, Master, we toiled all night, and took nothing: but at thy word I will let down the nets.

And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their nets were breaking; and they beckoned unto their partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them.

And they came, and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was amazed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken; and so were also James and John, sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

And when they had brought their boats to land, they left all, and followed him.

## 2.

12-16. And it came to pass, while he was in one of the cities, behold a man full of leprosy: and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him.

And he charged him to tell no man; but go thy way, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

But so much the more went abroad the report concerning him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed of their infirmities.

But he withdrew himself in the deserts, and prayed.

## 3.

17-26. And it came to pass on one of those days, that he was teaching; and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every village of Galilee and Judæa and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.

And behold, men bring on a bed a man that was palsied: and they sought to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

And not finding by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went up to the housetop, and let him down through the tiles with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

And seeing their faith, he said, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who

is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But Jesus perceiving their reasonings, answered and said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he said unto him that was palsied), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thy house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his house, glorifying God. And amazement took hold on all, and they glorified God; and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things today.

## 4.

27-32. And after these things he went forth, and beheld a publican, named Levi, sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him, Follow me. And he forsook all, and rose up and followed him.

And Levi made him a great feast in his house: and there was a great multitude of publicans and of others that were sitting at meat with them.

And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with the publicans and sinners?

And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician; but they that are sick.

I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

## 5.

33-39. And they said unto him, The disciples of John fast often, and make supplications; likewise also the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink. And Jesus said unto them, Can ye make the sons of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

But the days will come; and when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then will they fast in those days.

And he spake also a parable unto them; No man rendeth a piece from a new garment and putteth it upon an old garment; else he will rend the new, and also the piece from the new will not agree with the old.

And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the new wine will burst the skins, and itself will be spilled, and the skins

will perish. But new wine must be put into fresh wine-skins.

And no man having drunk old desireth new: for he saith, The old is good.

(c). 1.

vi. 1-5. Now it came to pass on a second-first sabbath, that he was going through the cornfields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. But certain of the Pharisees said, Why do ye that which it is not lawful to do on the sabbath day?

And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read even this, what David did, when he was an hungred, he, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did take and eat the shew-bread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests alone?

And he said unto them, The Son of man is lord of the sabbath.

2.

6-11. And it came to pass on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man there, and his right hand was withered. And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath; that they might find how to accuse him.

But he knew their thoughts; and he said to the man that had his hand withered, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. And Jesus said unto them, I ask you, Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to destroy it?

And he looked round about on them all, and said unto him, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored. But they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

## CHAPTER C. IV. 40.—VI. 11.

### WHAT JESUS BEGAN TO DO

a. iv. 40-44. b. v. 1-39. c. vi. 1-11.

#### a.

iv. 40-44. *Introduction.* In this chapter Theophilus was told about some of the things which Jesus, in virtue of His commission, began to do; the things foreshadowed in the list which heads the chapter. This list is a record of the doings of the Son of man, arranged as if it were the record of a day of creation, when "there was evening and there was morning, one day." In this kind of description, the night time covers the growth of the things which were being made; whilst the daytime shows them doing the work for which they were created. Not that a full description of either the formation, or the work, is to be expected; for as the words evening and morning point out, only enough is given to show what was being created, and what kind of work it was intended to do when created.

Of the five things which make up the doings of this day of the Son of man, two are given in the evening section, and three in the morning. Of the two in the evening, the first has to do with those who help Jesus, the second with those who speak for Him; whilst the three in the morning section touch upon three special needs which have to be supplied.

In the first part of the evening section we are shown people beginning to help Jesus. They are those who were bringing the diseased to Him. He treated them as if He

Himself had sent them to tell sick people the good news about Him and to bring them in; and He made their work His own. All who were brought to Him, no matter how many there were, He healed. But not in a mass. Each one of them was brought into direct personal contact with the Saviour, and taken into His care. And in the presence of His power, evil spirits let go their hold; crying out, and leaving the freed ones with their Lord.

The second part of the evening stage has to do with speaking to those who have been brought to Christ. The description is, what may be called, a negative one. We are not told about those whom Jesus would have speak for Him, but about those whom He would not. To know Him to be the Christ was not enough for such an office. The devils knew Him to be the Christ, and hailed Him as the Son of God; but what lost spirits could tell people about Jesus, would be full of terror and dark visions of the judgment to come, void of all hope of mercy and forgiveness; for they neither know Him as their Redeemer, nor as their Friend. They do not want to uplift people, to prepare them for heaven. Such beings the Saviour forbade to speak.

The morning opens with the Son of man going forth to the work which was to fill the daytime of this "day." "He came forth and went into a desert place." It was the Prophet like unto Moses setting forth to do work like that which Moses had done for the people in the wilderness, when he laboured to make them fit for the kingdom of God by interceding for them, teaching them, and helping them. To Him in that desert place the multitudes came with their needs. Those needs were three in number; so that the supplying of them divides the account of the work of the daytime into three parts. Instead, however, of mentioning them by name, the evangelist has merely said what the people did to get them supplied: they sought for Jesus; they came to Him; they besought Him not to leave them.

Thus the opening work of this day of the Son of man,

its morning's work, has to do with providing for the needs of people who are seeking for their Saviour; seeking to be cleansed from all deeds of darkness, and be made fit to live as children of light.

The second work of the day fits in with the noontide; the time when the light from above shines brightest, and the shadow falls least on the path that we tread. That work was to satisfy the needs of those who "came unto Him." Those who come thus to the Teacher come for light to guide them on life's way. They come to hear His words; to know the law of God by which they must walk; to learn what Jesus would have them do.

The third part of the work, that which fittingly closes the day, has to do with those who clung to Jesus, so that He should not depart from them. They represented people who know their weaknesses, and are seeking the strength which they need for keeping stedfast to the end.

Those five things furnish topics for the five sections into which the body of the chapter is divided, and form the beginnings of another stage of the proof which the evangelist was building up.

From what he has quoted about the good tidings of the kingdom of God, it is evident that the prominent place in the chapter is to be given to the first part of the Ordination of Jesus; that which had to do with preaching good tidings to the poor.

It was about the last and highest part, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, that Jesus had given evidence in Capernaum; and it was as carrying on that work to its end that He was pictured as preaching, or proclaiming, in the synagogues of Judæa, the remaining part of the Holy Land then occupied by the people of God. It was meant to show Theophilus that it was as the Head of all, the Holder and Giver of all authority and power, that Jesus was to be regarded in this chapter as doing whatsoever it was that He would be described as doing.

This is the first time that the expression "the kingdom of God" has been used in this treatise. Unless a writer explains that he is using them otherwise, words have to be regarded as bearing their ordinary, everyday meaning. When, for instance, a kingdom is spoken of, unless the reader is told to the contrary, there is to be understood a king and a people over whom he rules, as well as officials through whom he rules. The idea of government is always present in the word; a government whose source of authority and power is the king. Different ages, however, attach different degrees of importance to the various features of a kingdom; and as the feature, which, for the time being, has become the most prominent, overshadows the rest, the impression which the word conveys in one age, differs from that which it conveys in another. The way in which it is used in this treatise belongs, of course, to the age in which the treatise was written. That was an age of absolute monarchies; and all the uses made of the word are therefore in keeping with the rule of an absolute monarch.

From whatever point of view the kingdom of an absolute monarch is regarded, the king's rule is always to be seen. It forms an inseparable part of such a kingdom; and so prominent a place does it hold that, at times, it takes full possession of the name, and "the kingdom of God" refers solely to His rule.

What distinguishes the people of such a kingdom from all the rest of mankind is the fact that they belong to the king. Regarded from this point of view "the kingdom" is co-extensive with the people. It is made up of those, and only those, who belong to the king. He reigns over them. He makes his will known to them; and their part is to bow to that will, and do it. In a kingdom, however, people of all kinds are to be found, good, bad, and indifferent. All are members of it; but so inseparable is the idea of the king's rule, that, at times, only those are looked upon as forming part of the kingdom of God who have become so



thoroughly in accord with His will that they freely and gladly carry it out at once. Using this higher standard, "the kingdom" is limited to those who are, what may be called, good citizens.

It is evident that a different shade of meaning must be given to the word according as it is being used in connection with the king, the officials, or the people.

As regards the king himself, "his kingdom" (omitting the territorial aspect) means everybody under him, whether officials or not; and all taken together as a single body. Viewed in this light, it is, as it were, a living body; having its own peculiar nature; endowed with power, and ability to use it; capable of movement, of attack, of growth. The will which controls it is the king's. Being an absolute monarch, all centres in him. From him come all the authority and power which the officials wield. His are the laws. He alone marks out the course of the kingdom, and he alone decides what the standard of good citizenship shall be.

As regards the servants to whom he commits the carrying on of the kingdom, the name stands as before for the king's rule, his authority and power, but with limitations according to the positions which those servants are meant to fill.

"The kingdom" entrusted to the highest rank of officials, such as those who used to rule over provinces, would consist of all the rest of the officials and people; and would carry with it all the king's rule, authority, and power, except the initiative. Each, in his position over the part assigned to him, would be as a king over a kingdom; except that he would not be altogether absolute, inasmuch as he would be but a carrier-out of the king's will, a ruler under him, and answerable to him.

As for that other important body of officials whose members administer justice to the people, interpret and apply the laws for them, and raise them to the standard of be-

haviour which the king requires, the kingdom given to them is the rule, authority and power of the king both without his initiative and also without the governing power which distinguishes the rulers of provinces. Limited thus, "the kingdom" stands for the subduing power, and moulding force, required for making good citizens; and as regards those who compose it, consists of the people whom those officials have to get under their control and mould into good subjects of the king.

In such a kingdom, no share whatever in the king's rule, authority, or power is given to "the people." It is an absolute monarchy and their part is to obey; to bow to the rule of the king and do his will. Each is duly filling his place in the kingdom when he is keeping the laws readily and without compulsion; when the king has possession of his heart and rules therein without let or hindrance:—a state of affairs which has to be common to all, to the officials, as well as to those who hold no office. Looking at it thus, people receive the kingdom when they yield their hearts readily and willingly to the king and to the keeping of his laws.

The readers of the treatise were supposed to know from the context which of those shades of meaning was being given at any time to the expression "the kingdom of God."

The first step in the peaceable absorption of a people by such a kingdom is to win them over, and make them willing and eager to belong to it. The good tidings of that kingdom have to be preached to them. They have to be taught how good and desirable a thing it is to belong to it, so that after comparing it with their present state they may long for the change. Their consent won, they are annexed. After that comes the work of those who administer justice amongst them, teach them the laws of the kingdom, and train them up in its ways, so as to make good citizens of them. What has just been said of people as a body applies to each individual. Each one has to be won over, incor-

porated into the kingdom, and made a good citizen of it, loyal to the king.

It was a course like this that the evangelist described Jesus as taking with regard to the kingdom of God. In this chapter, the greatest prominence has been given to the first stage; Jesus drawing the hearts of people towards the kingdom by telling them the good tidings of it.

One very striking feature of this treatise is the way in which the evangelist has treated the doings and teachings of Jesus as being the development and perfection of something which was already known to men. He always makes it very plain, however, that what had been made known to them did not begin with the one who first proclaimed it to mankind, but came from God; and that whoever the mouthpiece was, whether angel or man, it was as the messenger of God that he spoke. He showed Theophilus that everything that Jesus of Nazareth did and taught had its origin, not on earth, but in heaven; and was what God the Father had willed should be done and taught: that God, by means of His messengers, had made the outline known, and Jesus had filled it in.

It was to enable men to tread in His steps and carry on His work that He began to give the training whose beginning is recorded in this chapter. The type which He used was John the Baptist just as Gabriel, speaking as one who stands in the presence of God, had described him.

The opening part of Gabriel's description showed John as one who was to turn people to God. Then comes the part which deals with his forerunnership; telling first of the spirit and power that would be given him for that office, and then of the three kinds of work he would have to do. First he would have to bring forgiveness to the children by turning the hearts of the fathers to them; then teach the disobedient to know and keep the laws of God; and lastly to make such a change in the natures of men that they would be ready for the coming of the Lord to them.

In other words, the preparation for the two great stages in the absorption of a people into a kingdom fell to the lot of John the Baptist; for the first part of his work had to do with winning the people, the second with making them ready for the coming of the King. Moreover those two parts of his work had to do with the first two parts of the commission of Jesus—those in which He was anointed to preach good tidings to the poor, and sent to make perfect the people of God—and paved the way for the fulfilment of that commission.

*Summary.* The next stage in the framework of the instruction which Theophilus had received is made up of things which Jesus began to do as the Christ, Whose description was given in the last chapter.

First He is shown preaching good tidings to the poor, and preparing men like Simon Peter to follow Him in that work and act as fishers of men for Him; then cleansing a leper and sending the man to testify to Him.

After that comes a sketch of the beginning of the training that He gave in connection with the three kinds of work which, as the Prophet, He was sent to do. First there are the bearers bringing a paralysed man, and getting for him the forgiveness of his sins. Then in Levi, the publican, who, as his name denoted, ought to have been a teacher of the law of God, there is shown the beginning of what is needed for a man to become a teacher for Jesus. Lastly, Theophilus was shown how Jesus, using children of the bridechamber as an illustration, taught His pupils the kind of men they had to be to make ready for His coming, and the rules which were to guide them in doing it.

The two sabbath scenes which close the chapter show Jesus, as the Creator of the Church, its Head and Ruler, teaching about the life and work in His kingdom.

## b. 1.

## A HELPER OF JESUS

*Type.* i. 14-16. And many shall rejoice at his birth;  
For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord;  
And he shall drink no wine nor strong drink;  
And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's  
womb;  
And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto  
the Lord their God.

*Commission.* iv. 18. He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor.

v. 11. The miraculous draught of fish.

The first part of the commission of Jesus was to preach the gospel to the poor, and with that work this first section deals. When we turn to it, however, we find, instead of the preaching of the gospel, the beginning of the creation of a body of men to help in that work. What Theophilus had to know about it was shown by means of a sample case; that of Simon Peter: the account of whose preparation follows the outline sketched by Gabriel in his description of the child who would turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.

The scene set before Theophilus is best viewed as if the reader were with him upon a hill-top by the lake of Gennesaret, and listening to the explanation of what was taking place down below. There, upon the shore, a crowd was pressing around some one who stood by the water's edge. They were people drawn by the rumour that had gone forth concerning Jesus; people who had heard that He claimed to be sent to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and had come to hear the word of God which was to set them free. As the Head and Source of all authority and power He was there, and as such He made the preparations recorded; but the part of the Christ-work that He was actually doing as He stood there before that multitude, was that of

preaching the gospel to the poor. He wanted every one to be able to hear Him; every one to be able to come to Him, like those who had come at the setting of the sun; but so closely were they pressing upon Him, that very few could properly hear, and fewer still could come.

A little way off were two fishing boats, standing empty on the shore by the edge of the lake; the fishermen busy, washing their nets. It made a strange contrast, the vast crowd so eager to hear the word of God, and that little group of men close by working away unheeding; making ready for another day's work, whilst the preaching of the word of God was at a stand-still, stopped for lack of help. It certainly was at the very beginning of the making of a Helper of Jesus that the evangelist was starting.

Of that group he singled out one for Theophilus to watch, so that he might learn from the way in which Jesus dealt with him, how sound the instruction was that he had received about the first steps in becoming a Helper of Jesus. The one chosen was called Simon, "one who hears, or obeys." Smoothly as the account reads, these selections from his training were all carefully made so as to correspond with the list of statements which had been given about John the Baptist.

The first thing which Jesus did was to give Simon something to do for Him. It was very little that He asked of him, but, little as it was, it called for self-sacrifice; for in doing it he had to forego his rest, give up some of his time, and let his property be taken possession of for a while by Jesus. Jesus entered in his boat, and asked him to put out a little from the land. Simon did it willingly, and the first step was won; for he was doing that which is the beginning of missionary work, helping to carry the Preacher to the people. What had been said about John the Baptist, the type of such workers, was true about Simon; many rejoiced at his birth for through him those multitudes were enabled to hear the word of God.

The speaking was over: but the boat, instead of returning went farther from the shore; for Jesus had said to Simon, "Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." This time, he was not asked: he was ordered. Had any choice been left him, he would doubtless have refused; for he could see no use at all in doing what Jesus said. His experience as a fisherman in that lake was against it; for he and his crew had toiled all the night, and had taken nothing. It seemed foolish, and a waste of time and labour. But although it was his own boat, and he was its captain, and in it his word was law, he put all that on one side and treated Jesus as the Captain; doing what He said as if he himself were but one of the crew. "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing; but at Thy word, I will let down the nets." That self-surrender showed Theophilus that Simon had the second of the marks of fitness that Jesus required of those who were to help Him in His work of preaching the gospel. He heard the word of Jesus, and did it. He had become "great in the sight of the Lord," for he now owned Jesus as his Chief.

When the great catch of fish had been gathered in, a man in one of the deeply laden boats was seen to fall down before some one who sat there apparently doing nothing. It was Simon, falling down at Jesus' knees, and treating Him no longer as his Master merely, but as his Lord. "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." He had not realized before Who it was That he was serving. He had had no faith in either the knowledge, or the power, of Jesus; but had acted as if Jesus knew nothing about the work, and had given a command unreasonable and useless. Now the light had flashed upon him, and he knew in Whose presence he was, and in Whose service he was; and the reverence which was to distinguish John the Baptist began to show itself.

The rule which had been laid down for John was, "He shall drink no wine nor strong drink." It was the rule

which Aaron and his sons had to follow whenever they entered into the tabernacle of witness (Lev. 10: 9). Its aim was to make them distinguish between things sacred and not-sacred. It reminded them that it was God's presence into which they were entering; God's service in which they were about to take part: and taught them that they were to enter upon the duties of their office with all the reverence that it was possible for human beings to have for things divine. Its having been decreed for John the Baptist showed that what he would have to do was sacred work; work to be done for God, and in His presence, and to be treated with the same deep reverence; whilst its having been made a life-long command showed that the service was for life, and unceasing. Those who were modelled upon John the Baptist had likewise to treat their work as sacred work for God, done in His presence, life-long, unceasing: and they had also to enter upon their duties with the deep reverence due to work done in the presence of God. That was the rock-bottom of their service; a foundation which Simon now had, as the evangelist showed by calling him Simon Peter.

Then came words of encouragement: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." It is from the inworking of the Holy Ghost that the power to catch men comes; and John, the type of fishers of men, was to be "full of the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb." The man, who lay there humbled before his Lord, had at last become able to help Him in His work of preaching the gospel to the poor. The aim of that work was to draw them into the kingdom of God. The way to catch them was to win their hearts for Jesus. And Simon now knew the way to the hearts of men, for he could speak from experience. A winner of souls must be able to tell people what Jesus has done for his own soul; and Simon, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost who had convinced him of his sin, could tell them now how the bands of pride and self-reliance had been



broken from off him; how, humbled to the dust, he had been raised a freedman of Jesus; and how his troubled heart had been filled with peace: and he could likewise assure them that what had been done for him could also be done for them. The great requisite for being a fisher of men was his.

The boats returned to the shore; but no longer was Jesus left to labour alone. Forsaking everything, Simon followed Him; and followed Him as an attendant follows his master, ready to go to whomsoever his master sends him, ready to bring to him whomsoever he wants. The multitude was still there to whom Jesus had preached the word of God; and Simon's part now was to bring those of them whom Jesus wanted brought, in order that they might receive the great spiritual gift foreshadowed in the introduction to the chapter when they brought to Jesus those who were sick of divers diseases, and He laid his hands upon every one of them, and healed them. When John the Baptist, the type of all such Helpers of Jesus, turned many of the children of Israel unto the Lord their God, he brought them to Him one by one by giving each of them the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins: and Simon, and those whom he represented, would also have to bring people to Christ one by one by giving them the Baptism unto the remission of sins. All that Theophilus was shown, however, in this description of what Jesus began to do, was Simon passing off the scene following Jesus, ready to bring to Him those whom His preaching of the word of God had won.

As already pointed out, the man, whose training the evangelist was describing all through this section, was Simon. It was his preparation that was being given as a sample of the way in which Jesus began to train His workmen. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, whose names are brought in so peculiarly, had no part whatever in showing Theophilus what a Helper of Jesus was to be like. They

certainly were amongst those connected with the miracle which so powerfully affected Simon; but as far as the convincing of Theophilus was concerned, their only part was to act as witnesses. Their names were given to him as being the names of people fully conversant with what had taken place; people to whom he could refer for all particulars of this miracle, the second of the referenced miracles which this evangelist gives.

The miracle was of a different nature from that which closed the last chapter, but the same three conditions are present in the account: the word of Jesus, the state of affairs before that word was spoken, and the state of affairs after it was spoken. There is too the same absence of details; but the eye-witnesses who were given as references were men who were specialists in the conditions under which it took place. The lake was their own fishing-ground, where their life's work had been carried on; and they not only knew the ordinary course of events there, but, having only just left off work, they knew how things were standing at the very time when Jesus gave His command. They could also tell Theophilus about everything that happened after Jesus spoke; for they themselves helped to gather in the fish. Experts, they would have been able to satisfy the most searching enquiry which anyone like Theophilus could wish to make.

One of those witnesses, James, was put to death by Herod Agrippa I, who reigned from A. D. 41-44. A dead man is useless as a reference; so that this treatise must have been written before the year A. D. 45, that is, within fifteen years of the Crucifixion.

## b. 2.

## A MESSENGER OF JESUS

*Type.* i. 17. He shall go before His face in the spirit and power of Elijah.

*Commission.* iv. 18. He hath sent me.

v. 12-16. The cleansing of the leper.

As it is only the beginning of what Jesus did that is being given in this chapter, we must not expect to find in the account of this day of creation anything more than a very faint outline of what He was creating. Faint as that outline looks to us, to people who had received the same kind of instruction that Theophilus had received, it would have seemed plain enough; and as for the various parts of the chapter which furnish that outline, their relation to one another would have been made sufficiently clear by such explanatory notes as that which heads this section: "And it came to pass while He was in one of the cities."

The note was made, not for the sake of pointing out what kind of place it was in which Jesus cleansed the leper, but to show what part of His ministry it was for which He was about to provide. It was the same as saying that what followed had to do with work which Jesus did whilst He was remaining in one of those cities. The cities referred to are those spoken of in the introduction, where the evangelist quotes Jesus as saying, "I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent." The preaching of the gospel was dealt with, as fully as this chapter of beginnings required, in the last section; and as the evangelist does not cover the same ground twice, what he was about to record had to do, not with the preaching of the gospel to the poor, but with the work which followed that preaching.

He is going straight on from where he left off in the last section. There he showed Theophilus how Jesus, when He had finished speaking to the people, began to prepare men

to help Him in carrying on that work; and closed the account with those men still with Him. Here he is showing Theophilus how, with those men still with Him, Jesus began to prepare for the carrying on of the work which He wanted done for people who had listened to the preaching of the gospel, and had been brought to Him. It was the second great division of His work for which He was now beginning to prepare; that of proclaiming release to captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and setting at liberty them that were bruised.

The path by which men were to be led to enter this service of Christ was foreshadowed in the second of the confirming proofs which closed the last chapter; the one with which this section, according to the plan of the treatise, is connected. There, as the Proclaimer of the acceptable year of the Lord, Jesus was shown freeing a woman from the great fever which held her, and thereby enabling her to give herself to His service: here, in the same character, He is shown freeing a man from the leprosy of which he was full, and thereby enabling him to be used in His service.

Like John the Baptist, their type also, the body of men which Jesus was now beginning to form had to go before His face in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet; that faithful messenger of God who sought His erring people to win them back to Him, taught them about Him, and tried to help them to give themselves wholly to His service. Those who go thus before the face of Jesus must know Him for Whom they are to speak; know Him in the character in which He wants them to speak for Him to His people. They must know Him as the Christ. The devils, however, in the introduction knew Him to be the Christ; but, for all that, He did not let them speak. They knew His power, and feared Him; but they did not know the heart of Jesus: they had not felt His pity and His love. They lacked one thing needful for speaking for Jesus—a personal knowledge of His heart and mind, and healing power. As might have

been expected from such an introduction, although the present section deals with a messenger of Christ, it is not with one who is fit to speak for Him.

In the account which follows, Jesus and the leper are spoken of as if they alone were there; but we know, from what has just been said, that Peter, James, and John, the three whose names had been given to Theophilus, were with Jesus; and there would also be with Him the rest of those who like them, had forsaken all and were following Him. By means of the lesson now given they were taught the beginning of what is needed by those who go before the face of the Lord. They were shown, as in an object lesson taken from life, how Jesus wished to be known, and how a man gains that personal knowledge of Him which is so essential for being His messenger; and they were also shown how, even with that knowledge, a man can fail altogether in doing the simplest work for Christ.

It was a strange picture, that was set before Theophilus, of the beginning of the training of the men who were to carry on the work of Christ. The figure of the man is at first so bright and clear; and then fades away so suddenly and so completely. At first he was full of faith in the power of Jesus to supply his great need, and prostrate before Him, learned of His heart and mind; but as soon as he was sent to testify for his Saviour, he vanished from the scene. In contrast, however, with the fading outline of the messenger, there stands out, clear and unfading, the figure of the One Who sent him. The Son of man is kept before our eyes from the beginning to the end. It is Jesus as seen by the leper; Jesus touching the outcast; Jesus testifying to Himself by means of His messenger; Jesus in the midst of the needy multitudes; Jesus in the deserts, praying.

The portrait, that was being shown to Theophilus, was that of the suffering Servant as described in Isaiah 53: 2-6 (Sep. Ver.). A double thread runs through those verses; one being a description of the Servant, and the other having

to do with the people who ask, "Lord, who has believed our report? And the arm of the Lord to whom has it been revealed?" Those speakers are represented, for the time being, by the leper, except that he begins by seeing in Jesus One able to help him in his need; otherwise he follows the sad description in the text. By means of him the men who were following Jesus were being taught to know Him as God's suffering Servant, and to serve Him thus without falling into the errors of those speakers who went so badly astray.

Beginning with the first of the five parts of the scene which those pupils of Jesus beheld, we can tell by the man's manner at the very outset that he was sure of not being rebuffed; for when he caught sight of Jesus, instead of withdrawing himself after the manner of lepers, he fell down on his face, and made his plea. Unlike the speakers in Is. 53: 2, although he could see in Jesus no form nor beauty, yet he was drawn to Him; no signs of greatness, yet he bowed to Jesus' will, saying, "Lord, if Thou wilt"; although He was "as a root in a thirsty ground," yet he knew that in Jesus there was such a healing power that He could take even his leprosy away, and make him clean. The qualities which those pupils of Jesus saw the man display, formed one of the marks of true messengers of Christ: he knew the kindness of Jesus, and acted upon that knowledge; he bowed to the will of Jesus; and he had faith in His power to supply his great need.

The man was a leper, and therefore an outcast. When in the misery of loneliness he caught sight of his fellow-men, he had to view them afar off. None would come near him; much less touch him. Driven from the abodes of men, his home and his friends knew him no more. His uncleanness had cut him off from "the congregation," from the people of God; and he had become a loathsome likeness of the separating power of sin. And now, bowed down before Jesus, he was awaiting the answer to his prayer. The ear of misery is

quick to perceive any backwardness in answering its plea; the eye of the outcast is keen to detect any shrinking in those to whom he draws near. But no hesitation was there, for his prayer was to One "in suffering, and acquainted with the bearing of sickness" (Is. 53: 3): there was no shrinking back in Jesus; though doubtless the surroundings shrank back from Him, for He had made Himself as one whose "face was turned away," as one who is a leper. He had stretched forth His hand and touched the leper. The gulf of separation was bridged by that touch. The man was no longer an outcast and alone, for the Saviour's hand lay upon him. The joy of the welcome of Christ was his, and he had that personal knowledge of the Saviour's heart which messengers of His mercy must have.

The remaining features of this part of the scene pictured to Theophilus the beginnings of the making of a messenger of Christ with regard to knowledge of His mind and healing power. In both cases the ground-work of the messenger's fitness lay in his own personal knowledge of Jesus.

The man bowing before Him, and listening to His words, "I will; be thou made clean," had learned the mind of Jesus about himself: and not about himself only, but about all humanity; a purpose reaching to its lowest outcasts. He had learned something which those who teach the laws of the kingdom of God have to know—that it is the will, the desire of Jesus, that all should be made fit for that kingdom: and knowing from himself how good it was to hear the words of the Son of man, he ought to have been the more ready to make His will known to others.

Likewise when the leprosy immediately departed from him, and he knew of himself the healing power of Jesus, he had gained a knowledge which all messengers of the great Healer of mankind must have for bearing His messages of healing with confidence to others.

So much for the beginning of the outline of a messenger of Christ. Those whom the Lord was training could see that

the man was one who knew so much of Jesus that he came to Him in his need, bowed to His will, trusted in His power; and they saw him being taught by Jesus to know Him as the suffering Christ, despised and shunned of men, the Man Who touched the leper. Then they learned that there was more needed yet before he could serve as a messenger of Jesus; that there was still more for him to know about Jesus as the Christ.

In this account of a messenger of Jesus the evangelist has made the same two divisions that he made when describing a Helper of Jesus. Having shown Theophilus, as far as a chapter of beginnings should go, the kind of man whom Jesus chose to be His messenger, he now goes on to deal with the qualities needed for doing the work and bearing the message. The three short paragraphs in which the germs of the things required are given, are all linked together, and have to do with the man after the leprosy had departed from him. Short as they are, they are clear enough to those who know that the evangelist is following Is. 53: 4-6, which runs thus in the Septuagint Version:

4. He bears our sins and is pained for us; and we accounted him in trouble, in suffering, and in ill-treatment.

5. But he was wounded for our sins, and was made sick for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruise we were healed.

6. All we like sheep have gone astray; everyone has gone astray in his way, and the Lord gave him up for our sins.

The speakers, starting in verse four with a mistaken view of the sufferings of the Servant, go astray altogether in verse six. In the fifth verse, which is very closely connected with the fourth, we see the Sufferer as the speakers' Saviour, the fruits of their faults and failings pouring in upon him; whilst in the sixth he is given up for their sins.

The man had been cleansed by Christ; but he did not know enough about Him yet to be allowed to speak for Him. He knew Him indeed as the suffering Servant "Who



bears our sins, and is pained for us," for Jesus had touched him, and had taken away his leprosy, the cause of his uncleanness; but, like the speakers who failed (Is. 53:4), he did not yet know the suffering Servant in His true light. He knew enough, indeed, for Jesus to make him His messenger; but it was to testify by deeds, and not by words, that he was sent; and all that was given him to do was to show himself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded.

We learn from Lev. 14. that it was the priest who had to decide whether anyone's leprosy had departed from him, or not. He was the recognised authority upon cleanness and uncleanness; and when the cleansed leper had shown himself to the priest, and had been found spotless, the priest's verdict testified to the people that Christ had indeed taken his leprosy away, and that he was clean.

But the man had also his own testimony to bear. Eight days after a leper had been examined by the priest, and pronounced clean, he had to make three offerings; the trespass, the sin, and the burnt. It was the trespass-offering which was "a testimony unto them"; the other two concerned only the man himself. These last offerings might be either lambs, doves, or young pigeons, so long as the same kind of creature was used for them both; but for the trespass-offering it was always a lamb that had to be slain. The other two offerings had to do with two stages of the same thing, the changing of the man into one of the true people of God; and were his tokens to God that he had turned from his old life to walk henceforth in the light of God's laws, trusting to His forgiveness for the past, and that he had now devoted himself wholly to God: the trespass-offering was the token to his fellow-men that his leprous life was over, and that he had been restored to the Lord.

The way in which that testimony was made was this. The man brought all his offerings to "the door of the tabernacle of testimony"; and the priest, having made him stand

there "before the Lord" in the sight of the people, sacrificed the lamb for the trespass offering, and touched him with its blood. The making of that offering was the man's public testimony, not only that he had been examined the week before and pronounced clean by the priest, but also that he himself believed and accepted the verdict of the priest, and was sure that he had been made fit to stand before the Lord. And as he stood there with the blood of the lamb upon him, he was testifying also unto them all that it was by what that blood typified that his trespass had been taken away, and he had been received by God.

The testimony to be made by the cleansed leper showed those pupils of Jesus, in a figure, what they themselves would have to be able to testify about Him, if they would become fit to speak for Him. They would have to be able to testify from their own personal experience, that He takes away all the uncleanness of those who come to Him as that leper had come; and that those who are thereupon pronounced clean have been restored to God by the Blood of the Lamb which has touched them.

The man failed in his mission: though how he failed is not recorded here; merely the words "but so much the more" to show that he had gone wrong: and then he is left to pass away into the background, and out of sight. His failure, however, had made the report spread abroad still more concerning Jesus as the great Physician Who had taken a man's leprosy away and made him clean; for it was for him, His messenger, that Jesus had done it, as God's Servant in Is. 53:5 had suffered for the speakers. Far and wide amongst the people that report had spread; but no messenger was there to bring them to Jesus.

Two other parts of God's Messenger's work are touched upon by the evangelist at the same time: the teaching, and the perfecting of the cleansed. Throngs of people are shown coming together to hear, and to be made sound by the healing of their infirmities; but for those things, too, no messen-

ger of Jesus is to be seen. Men ready and willing to help their Lord in supplying those three great needs, cleansing, teaching, and healing, had still to be found.

In the last part of the scene set before Theophilus there is no sign whatever of the cleansed leper; no trace of any messenger of Christ; no one but Jesus withdrawing Himself in the deserts, and praying: the Scapegoat in the wilderness. It was a lesson upon the behaviour of the speakers in Is. 53:6, showing how the waywardness of His messengers stops the work of Jesus; how their sins of service all fall upon Him: a living picture of the verse, "All we like sheep have gone astray; everyone has gone astray in his way, and the Lord gave him up for our sins."

### b. 3.

#### SERVANTS OF THE DELIVERER.

*Type.* i. 17. To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.

*Commission.* iv. 18. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives.

v. 17-26. The forgiveness of the sick of the palsy.

The evangelist then went on to show Theophilus the beginning of the special training which Jesus gave His pupils to fit them for carrying on the several parts of the work in which the cleansed leper had failed. In doing this he made use of the same spectacular method as before; his living picture being introduced by a short explanatory note, "And it came to pass on one of the days; and He was teaching."

The first part of the note, "And it came to pass on one of the days," refers to the time which Jesus spent in the "one of the cities" mentioned in the last section; and shows that what was about to be dealt with was the work which He did for the people to whom He had preached the gospel. The needs which He supplied were those of the multitudes in the introduction to the chapter who sought after Him, came to Him, and clung to Him.

The second part of the opening note, "And He was teaching," is a reference note to the foregoing chapter, which was about Jesus teaching; but it refers more particularly, however, to that part of it which dealt with His teaching at Capernaum. In the synagogue there He had shown that He was the One sent to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord; so that the note "And He was teaching" pointed out that in this section Jesus was to be regarded as the Christ, the Proclaimer of the acceptable year of the Lord, proclaiming the truth that would make people free.

The captives to whom release was to be proclaimed were represented in the introduction to the chapter by the people who sought Jesus so early in the morning. In the last section they were pictured as flocking to Jesus because they had heard that He had had mercy on the leper, and had taken away that which was separating him from the rest of the people of God. They were thus people who were seeking to be freed from the leprosy of sin which was shutting them out from communion with the worshippers of God; captives of sin, seeking release from the sins which had enslaved them; contrite in heart, seeking to be healed by the great Physician. In keeping with this, the first part of the work of him who was to go before the face of the Lord to prepare His way was to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. The position in which fathers stood towards their children amongst the Jews, the tremendous importance attached to their blessing and their curse, made it plain that the work spoken of was that of securing pardon and a loving welcome for offenders: and for such work Jesus now began to prepare His pupils.

It is the same suffering Servant of Is. 53:2-6 Who appears in the lesson which was given them; but those who represent the speakers no longer show the same unvarying ignorance about Him. As we see by the bearers, they now know the mind of Jesus towards the sin-sick who seek Him; they serve Him willingly and steadfastly; they honour Him

in the face of all men; and they have faith in Him as the Saviour of men. But two things are still lacking: the first and the last of those touched upon in the cleansing of the leper. The lowness and seeming feebleness of Jesus of Nazareth are still a stumbling-block; and they still go astray in their way. In these two things the speakers in the prophecy are represented, not by the bearers, but by the Pharisees, the great religious guides of the people, the shepherds of Israel who sat there in the room where Jesus was teaching.

It was not to brand them for their behaviour that the evangelist has singled out the Pharisees. His object in bringing them into the treatise was not to make sure that Theophilus knew what bad people they were, but to make sure that he knew the certainty of the things in which he had been instructed; and it was only because he found them useful to him in his undertaking, that he has mentioned them at all. The scanty information that he gives about them, and the way in which he takes it for granted that his readers will understand all that the mention of the Pharisees was meant to convey, makes it certain that such people as Theophilus were already familiar with the use that is made of them here.

From what Josephus says about them, the Pharisees were the great religious trainers of the common people. Putting his scattered remarks together, we find that they dealt, in their way, with the three great needs of the multitudes for which Jesus was providing. Professing to be highly favoured by God, they decided how He should be approached, and made the people follow their directions. They valued themselves highly upon the exact skill which they had in the law of their fathers: and in that, too, they made themselves the authority which the people were to follow. They also lived meanly, and despised delicacies in diet; and having won the esteem of the multitude by their virtuous conduct, became the models upon which the lives

of the people were formed. They had no legal standing to enforce their ruling, but were self-appointed shepherds of the people.

It was to their well-known position over the people that they owed their place in this treatise. By means of them the evangelist was able to show Theophilus, with the least amount of explanation, what Jesus was doing with the men whom He was training. They are never cited as an example to be followed, but always as something to be avoided; and it was only by contrast that they showed what ought to be done. They are bad shepherds, used as foils to set off what good shepherds should be.

Sometimes the evangelist points out the use he is making of the Pharisees by means of some remark that he makes: sometimes he does it by associating with them either lawyers, or scribes; the choice depending upon whether he is using them as interpreters of the law, or as appliers of the law. Here, and here only, they are connected with teachers of the law: men who knew the will of God, and told it to His people. The release about which Theophilus was being assured had to be proclaimed to all the people of God; and from all parts of the Holy Land still held by the Jews those teachers of the law were pictured as coming, as if to learn from Him Who was sent to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the word which would set the captives free.

In the Pharisees' eyes, those who kept the law were holy: those who failed were sinners, outcasts, unfit to associate with the people of God. For them they had no pity. They held out no helping hand to any who repented; they gave them no welcome. Not only were their hearts close shut against sinners, but they had no faith in the cleansing power of Jesus, the sinners' Friend. They were there, that day, in the very presence of the Saviour of men: but they could see nothing of the great Physician of souls in Him; no sign of the power to heal the contrite heart, to set the

captives free. Outside were crowds of sin-sick folk, helpless, perishing; pining to be freed from their sins, to be cleansed and restored: and within, the shepherds of Israel sat unmoved; with neither faith nor inclination to bring them in to Him Who stood there waiting to welcome them, having with Him the power of the Lord to heal all who came: that power of God the Father which shows itself in giving pardon to sinners, release to the captives. The arm of the Lord was with Him, still waiting to be revealed.

The second scene, which was set before Theophilus, lay outside the house. From the far background came men, bearing a bed. Upon the bed lay a man, paralysed and helpless; and they were seeking to bring Him in, and lay him before Jesus. That paralysed man was a representative of the great multitudes in the last section who had heard the report that went abroad concerning Jesus and the leper; and also of the multitudes in the introduction to the chapter who, when the light came, sought for Jesus.

The paralysis which disabled him was a type of the effect which an act of sin has upon the soul. Like a stroke of paralysis, sin benumbs the soul, and deadens it: making it dull and indifferent to things holy; unable to work the works of righteousness; unable to walk the heavenward way; unable even to stand upright. The soul still lives; but it is helpless. The strength has gone from it. As usual in Jesus' training of His servants, the man's was an extreme case; but paralysis of the soul, in some degree or other, was the trouble with all the multitudes just mentioned, as well as the neglected people whom those bad shepherds would not bring to Jesus. They were captives of Satan; people who had fallen into sin, and could only be set free by having their sins taken away.

Those who were bringing the man in his unhappiness were men who had that which all such bearers of the sin-sick must have—the heart of Jesus. They were evidently men who knew Jesus as He had shown Himself to the leper;

knew Him as One acquainted with grief Who does not shrink from touching the foulest of men; knew His longing and His readiness to welcome the outcasts, to cleanse and restore them; and, yearning themselves for the man, they had brought him to Jesus to be within reach of the hand that had rested upon the leper who had lain on the ground before Him.

The next in this series of scenes is a kind of parable. The way to Jesus was blocked by those shepherds of Israel, the men who did not believe that the power of the Lord was with Him to heal. They saw Him and His work from their own earthly stand-point; and there was no getting healing for the soul through men who viewed Jesus thus. The light in which true workers for Christ see Him, and know Him, comes from above; so Theophilus was shown the bearers going up to the house-top, and letting the man down in his couch through the tiles into the midst before Jesus, just as he was; unable to rise of himself, or to do anything to make amends for his sins. None can keep those who see Jesus thus from bringing their sin-sick to Him for healing.

They seemed to have done for the man all that human beings could do for a contrite heart; for they had brought him to Jesus: but there was still something in which they had also a share. How they took part in it was by faith. Without doubt faith had been present in them from the very first, from the time when they started until they had laid the man penitent before Jesus; but all those things might have been done from kindness, or from some other motive than faith. Now, however, those bearers had reached the stage where nothing could take the place of faith: a fact which the evangelist emphasized by leaving out everything else—their prayers and pleadings for the man, their words of encouragement and comfort—and making their faith stand out clear, distinct, and alone. It was when Jesus saw their faith, he told Theophilus, that He



said to the man whom they had brought, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

Their faith was that which all true servants of the Deliverer must have: the faith that the Saviour forgives the sins of the penitent, whom they, as His servants, lay before Him. Jesus, and Jesus alone, forgave the man's sins, blotting out the past as if it had never been, and making him pure and spotless; but it was because of the bearers' faith, faith unwavering, undaunted, that those wonderful words were uttered which rolled away the load of sin, and set the captive free; crowning their work with the glorious beauty of a purified soul. And those words of Jesus are very precise and clear: at that very time when He was speaking, God's word was passed, and the sins of the man were forgiven.

But the man, whose sins had been forgiven, still lay there at the Saviour's feet, giving no sign that he had realised what those words of absolution meant; no sign that he was regarding his deliverance as a fact. And from those around him no word of encouragement came; no welcoming of him back to the people of God. Even had they been willing, they could have given him no assurance that he was now cleansed, and restored to God; for they did not yet know that the Son of man had authority on earth to forgive sins.

It was about that authority of the Son of man, that great fact upon which the power of servants of Christ to do this work for Him depends, that the evangelist certified Theophilus in this closing scene. In doing it he again brought in the Pharisees, those examples of bad shepherds who, like the speakers of Is. 53:6, instead of following God's way, go astray. This time, however, he associated them with the scribes.

The scribes were the same body of men who, at times, are spoken of in this treatise as lawyers, and in this section as doctors of the law. As the names doctors of the law

and lawyers show, they taught both the letter of the law, and also the interpretation of it, telling the people what they ought, or ought not to do. But their main function was that which they were exercising when, in this treatise, they are called scribes. As scribes they acted as guardians of the morals of the people, enquiring into their doings, and condemning whatever they thought wrong; prosecuting them publicly, it would seem, if need arose. Their discharge of this duty would necessarily consist mainly in condemning people; not, of course, of themselves as fancy moved them, but according as they judged people wrong by the law of God.

In this scene the Pharisees were following the lead of the scribes; so that what Theophilus was being shown was the forgiven man lying there surrounded by men who had no welcome to offer him, no encouragement to give him, no word of assurance about the glorious reality of the forgiveness which he had received, nothing to comfort the contrite heart: for their knowledge of God's will stopped at condemnation, and they could only crush with the thoughts of judgments which never, in this world, would be removed. They knew that he had received the word of Jesus telling him that his sins were forgiven; but for all that they still regarded him as a sinner, as one on whom the guilt of breaking God's laws still lay: for they held that man cannot grant absolution. "Who is this that speaketh blasphemies?" said they. "Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Their questions, of course, voiced the difficulties which had confronted Theophilus, and serve to show us what it was that he had to be made so clear about. What he was enquiring into was the truth of what he had been taught about carrying on that part of the work of Jesus of Nazareth which has to do with the forgiveness of sins; and the way in which his enquiries were being met shows that he took some such ground as this: The authority to forgive sins comes from the Man of Nazareth; then unless the au-

thority on earth to forgive sins were really His, pronouncing the words of absolution is blasphemy in the speakers, and of no profit to the hearers.

We have seen before in this treatise, that when a divine announcement was made which the hearers had to accept on trust, there was coupled with it something which they could put to the proof, and, by finding it true, be strengthened in their faith. In the present instance a physical miracle was done to assure them of the unseen change which had taken place at the word of Jesus when He pronounced the absolution.

It was as the Son of man that Jesus spoke; and the sign which He gave in answer to the two questions of those erring speakers, was intended to convince them, first, That it is given to men to bear to penitent sinners God's pardon for their sins; and secondly, That the authority here on earth to forgive sins belongs to the Son of man. His answer would have given Theophilus the assurance he was seeking: for by the Son of man having this authority on earth is meant that the power to forgive sins here upon earth is His, and His to use as He sees fit; that He can employ whomsoever He will to act for Him; and that when they speak in His name, the sins of the penitent are forgiven, for it is He himself speaking and acting through them His servants.

The choice of the sign was evidently made to suit the line which their reasoning had taken. Afflictions were regarded as evidences of guilt; God's judgments upon the person for evil done: and they would have argued, that if the man's guilt had really been taken away, and God's judgment reversed, his affliction would have been taken away too. But he still lay there paralysed; and it looked to them as if Jesus had claimed to be able to do something which no one could see whether it had taken place or not, but had carefully avoided what they could have seen and examined.

Thus they seemed to have reasoned in their hearts; for He asked them which was easier, to say "Thy sins are forgiven thee," or to say "Arise and walk": and then gave them the sign by which they could know of a surety that the Son of man has authority upon earth to forgive sins. In that sign there were three distinct stages which He pointed out to them, three actions which they could see and judge: Arise; Take up thy couch; Go to thy house; symbolic actions, which, whether rightly understood by those people or not, answered their reasonings; and, when properly read, enable people of all times, by the changes in the lives of the penitent, to assure themselves of the reality of the forgiveness of sins.

As soon as ever the words were uttered, a change took place. The bearers, looking down from above, could see that the paralysed man had trusted to the word of Jesus, and had acted upon it; for they saw him arise, take up his bed, and depart to his house glorifying God, going to take his place once more amongst the people of God: and an "ecstasy" took possession of them, and of those shepherds of Israel; and they all glorified God. Then they were filled with fear at the thought of what it all meant; for they knew that they had been seeing "paradoxes," things contrary to opinion: they had been seeing that which people held was never done; a man exercising the authority to forgive sins, and the forgiven sinner, no longer a fallen man, rejoicing in his freedom, and praising God for the love which had restored him.

It was but a stroke of the pen in describing the scene, merely the slight change from saying that the man took up his bed, to saying that he took up that whereon he lay; but it was enough to call up the picture of a Jew travelling in a heathen land, bearing that whereon he was to lie in order to keep free from defilement and fit to be welcomed by his brethren the people of God: enough to show that the man

who had arisen, had become one of those who are living as strangers and pilgrims in the world.

The man departed to his house glorifying God; but what kind of welcome awaited him, or whether he was welcomed back at all, we are not told. He passed off the scene altogether, and the lesson which he was supplying abruptly ended.

The state which this fifth scene describes comes after the forgiveness of sins; for it is only after his sins have been forgiven that a fallen man can arise, begin again to live as a stranger and pilgrim in the world, and boldly and joyfully lay claim to his place amongst the people of God. The moving force in this miracle is the word of Jesus. It was because he had heard the word of Jesus, and acted upon it, that the paralysed man was able to do those three things which placed him as he was before; and it is on the strength of the word of Jesus that the forgiven sinner still ventures to take his place once more amongst the people of God.

Those who saw and heard this lesson were in two minds as to the line which they ought to follow in interpreting the scene: whether to attend to the outward or to the inward; to the seen, or to the unseen; to the body, or to the soul. First they were thrilled with delight at seeing the bodily effects of sin swept away, and the man set out to take his place once more on the same footing as his fellow men: then they were filled with awe as the meaning of those outward signs flashed upon them, and they knew that they had been seeing a fallen soul arise, break free from its old surroundings, and the man set out to take his place once more amongst the saints of God, because he had heard the word of the Son of man, of Him Who has authority on earth to forgive sins. Swaying thus in their minds, the evangelist has left them.

## b. 4.

## FOLLOWERS OF THE TEACHER

*Type. i. 17.* To turn the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just.

*Commission. iv. 18.* To proclaim recovering of sight to the blind.

v. 27-32. The call of Levi.

According to the plan of the chapter as set forth in its introduction, the next kind of work for which Jesus began to prepare men was to supply the needs of those represented by the people who came unto Him. It was the second part of His day's work for which He was preparing; work which belonged, as it were, to the noon-tide, the time when the light of the sun is given to men in its fulness, and their path is most clearly shown. In the synagogue at Nazareth He had claimed that the second part of the work that He was sent to do was to proclaim the recovering of sight to the blind; so that it was to have their blindness taken away that those people had come to Him. Their need was supplied in the same way as that of the multitudes who, when the cleansed leper vanished from the scene, came to Jesus "to hear"; for the blindness is that which shows itself in not being able to see the way of righteousness. It was in order that those who come to hear His words shall not come in vain, that He began to give the following training.

It was "after these things" that Jesus went forth to find men to take the place of the vanished messenger, and carry on this work of teaching those who came to hear; that is, after the things the evangelist had just told Theophilus about servants of the Deliverer: for it is after the message of pardon has been given and received, that the time for this teaching comes.

Those whom Jesus used would have to go before His face in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just. They would have to

teach people the laws of God and the ways of His kingdom; and to teach with such power, that they would get them to accept those laws, and try to walk in those ways. The beginnings of such a class of men were shown by means of a publican, a collector of customs, who was sitting at the place of custom levying dues.

The mention of his name, Levi, served to remind Theophilus what the lesson was to be about; for it showed that the man was a member of that family of whom it was said in Deut. 33:10 "They shall declare Thy ordinances to Jacob, and Thy law to Israel," and that, by rights, he was a teacher of the law of God, a teacher of righteousness. But there he sat dumb, as far as the law of God was concerned; unable to teach it, unfit to teach it. Instead of being devoted to the kingdom of God, he was serving the great world-power which was crushing the people of God, and he was teaching and enforcing its laws.

Jesus gazed upon Levi in his bondage, and gave the order, "Follow Me." With the command went the power to obey, and at once the man was set free; set free by the "power of the Lord" which Jesus used; conquered by Christ. "He forsook all." The evangelist has made use of a different word from that which he used when speaking about Simon and the others forsaking all and following Jesus. They indeed left their boats and nets, and all that they had caught, but it was open to them to use their gear again, if occasion arose: whereas Levi left everything as a man leaves all when he dies. His service of that foreign power had ceased forever: its aims, its laws, its ways, were no longer his; he had died to them, and henceforth lived only for Christ and His work. As Elisha arose and followed Elijah the prophet, so Levi arose and followed Jesus, to serve Him, and to obey Him; to go where He wanted him to go; to do whatsoever He would have him do; always following with the aim in view of learning to become what his

Master was, a Teacher of righteousness. That was his first mark of fitness for the work—he was conquered by Christ.

Levi, the attendant of the great Teacher, must have been a far different being from Levi the tax-gatherer; but the only thing which the evangelist told Theophilus about him after he had yielded to Christ, was the great feast, or reception, which he made for Him. The reason for telling him about this was, that it helped him in his research by showing him something of the second of those marks of fitness required of men who carry on this part of Christ's work. In honour of Jesus the feast had been made; but the honouring lay, not in the food which was provided, but in the people who were brought to hear the great Teacher of righteousness: not good, respectable people, but those whom the Teacher wanted, the publicans and others who were in such great need of knowing the laws of God, and the ways of His kingdom.

In giving this reception, Levi, the freedman of Christ, showed what kind of man he really was. The Teacher Whom he sought to serve, he made his Guest, and showed that he knew His mind, by gathering into the place where the word of God would be taught, those who so badly needed to hear it.

A sudden change now takes place in the account. Levi, who had been used to show Theophilus the kind of men whom Jesus wanted for teachers of righteousness, drops out of sight altogether. He was, of course, still there; but it was as one of that band of "disciples" whose training is now being described by means of the Pharisees.

A disciple is a pupil, or scholar; so that the "disciples" of Christ were people who were being taught by Him. The name itself is no guide, either to what they were being taught, or what their standing was in the school of Christ. There were several grades in that school, and each had its own course of instruction; but to whatsoever grade they



may have belonged, they are all spoken of as His pupils. The way in which the treatise is arranged, however, enables the reader to see at once to what part of the school of Christ the evangelist is referring when he mentions them. In this present section, for instance, they are regarded as belonging to the class that was being trained to become messengers of Jesus, and learning especially about Him as the Teacher.

The Pharisees again represent unworthy shepherds. This time they are associated with scribes; not with scribes generally, but their own scribes, men who interpreted and applied the Pharisaical laws, and enforced them upon the people; so that they are now standing for those, who, in their office of teachers of righteousness, teach and enforce their own laws of righteousness, and not those of God. It was through their condemnation of Christ's pupils, and what He told them in reply, that Theophilus learned the beginning of what true servants of Christ require for doing this work.

The fact that it was the Pharisees who were described as murmuring against them for being on such intimate terms with those publicans and sinners who had come to Him, showed Theophilus that what they condemned was the very quality which servants of Christ should have. No reply is recorded as coming from those upon whom the Pharisees sat in judgment: nor, indeed, is any such record needed; for it may be taken for granted that, as pupils of Christ, they were with Him to learn what He taught, and how He taught it. They ate and drank with those publicans and sinners, not for the pleasure of their company, but because, by so doing, they were enabled to be with Jesus and hear Him; and such was the esteem in which they held their Teacher, and the value which they set upon His teaching, that they set at naught the laws of society, and willingly lowered themselves in the eyes of their fellow-countrymen, in order to be with their Master and to learn of

Him. That high esteem for Jesus and His teaching forms the foundation of the first of the three qualifications which His servants need in order to teach for Him.

The two other qualifications are found in the two answers which Jesus gave to the Pharisees. In the first of them He explained, from a teacher's point of view, why His pupils should be there; and in the second, why publicans and sinners should be there.

"They that are whole have no need of a physician; but they that are sick" is one of those self-evident statements whose value as proverbs lies in the way in which they can be applied to cases differing from those which give rise to them. The class of cases to which this proverb was to be applied was pointed out by a word meaning "sound of mind" being used for "whole."

Soundness of mind in a teacher of the law shows itself in two ways. As regards the law, it shows itself in his having a clear, true grasp of it; giving to every part of it its right value, so that nothing is left out, nothing distorted, nothing misapplied. As regards the teacher himself, it shows itself in what he makes the object of his ambition as a teacher, and in the sincerity with which he lives up to the law that he teaches.

The Pharisees thought that they had all that men could possibly need for teaching the law. Such a description as the following would have been endorsed by any of them: "Thou knowest His will, and approvest things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth." Such people, sure of their perfect knowledge and ability to teach, would see no need for coming to Jesus to be taught the way; and such people had no place amongst the pupils whom He was training.

The men whom He wanted were just the opposite. They

were men who knew that they were unfit to be teachers of righteousness; who knew their own blindness about spiritual things, and their ignorance of what to insist upon as being of vital importance, and what not; men who needed the great Teacher of righteousness to set them right and take their imperfections away, and knew that they needed Him.

Of such a type were those pupils of Christ. Knowing their own unfitness, they were with Him whilst He taught, so that they might learn His methods and His ways, see what He taught and how He taught it, and note how thoroughly His life and His teaching agreed together; that being modelled on Him, and made sound in their views as teachers, they would be able to help Him in dealing with those who "came to hear."

The second part of the answer to the Pharisees explained why such people as publicans and sinners should be there; and thus showed what aim the pupils of Jesus, as the great Teacher, were being taught to keep in view.

"I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance"; that is, to convince sinners so thoroughly about what God wanted them to be and to do, that they would turn from their old ways, and firmly resolve to obey the laws which they had heretofore been breaking.

That was why He had not merely suffered the publicans and sinners to be there with Him, but had wanted them to come; and those words of Jesus established for Theophilus the rule which he had been taught that servants of Christ were to follow with regard to such people. Their great aim was to be to turn those wanderers into the way of righteousness; or, as it was said about John the Baptist, to turn the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just, getting them to become doers of the laws of God's kingdom: and they had attained that aim when they had not only taught such people to know what was right, but had also led them into the way of doing it.

## b. 5.

## PREPARERS FOR THE LORD

*Type.* i. 17. To make ready for the Lord a people prepared.

*Commission.* iv. 18. To set at liberty them that are bruised.

v. 33-39. Marriage-feast customs.

We now come to the close of this "day" of the Son of man, to the work done in answer to prayer made, as it were, at eventide; the prayer of those who "would have stayed Him, that He should not go from them." They were clinging to the Saviour thus closely, because, as shown by the multitudes who came to Him after the cleansed leper had departed, they had come "to be healed of their infirmities." Knowing their weaknesses they wanted the Source of health and strength to be with them always; and He answered their prayer by training men to help them in their infirmities until He should come again.

Having an infirmity does not mean that the person is utterly bad, like the man who was full of leprosy; but rather, that he is like Naaman the Syrian, whose healing Jesus made use of to illustrate this part of His work as the Prophet. Naaman was the man whose life was spoiled by a single blemish. He had risen high in the kingdom of his master, and was greatly esteemed for the deeds he had done; but however great glory and honour he might gain, a plague spot which nothing could cure, was always present with him, tarnishing and defiling. Mighty in strength though he was, he could not break free from the leprosy which had fastened upon him. So it is with a person who has an infirmity. There is something in him ruining his life; some bad influence from which he cannot free himself; some bad habit that has grown upon him, that he is unable to break off; some old temptation to which he had

yielded, and which he has lost the power to resist. He can not wholly subdue the flesh to the spirit.

This part of Jesus' mission was to deliver people from evil and heal their infirmities; or, to use the words which He Himself quoted, "to set at liberty them that are bruised." The quotation is from Isaiah 58:6; and is taken from the list of things which the prophet was to do as the repairer of breaches. He was to make God's people fit for Him by setting them free, and providing them with food and clothing; and that, in a figure, was the work which Jesus now began to prepare men to carry on for Him.

The fastings and prayers of the Baptist's pupils gave Theophilus the key to the section. John was sent to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him; and with that end in view, those whom he was training to help him fasted and made supplications. Like the fastings and supplications of Daniel, their supplications would have had to do with the release of God's people from bondage, and their fastings, to make themselves fit to offer those prayers. The coupling of them with the fastings and supplications of the pupils of the Pharisees showed Theophilus that it was not to them that he was to look for support of the instruction he had received, but to the things which Jesus taught His own pupils in correction of them.

The form which their training took was well suited for men whose work it would be to make people ready for the Lord: for it was given them as to men who wanted to act as servants of the Bridegroom and care for His guests. Its arrangement is the same as that of their training in the last section. First come two statements about the kind of men whom Jesus would use thus, and then three things which they would need in order to be able to do what He wanted.

The fitness of John's pupils for making their supplications was judged by their frequent fastings: the fitness of

pupils of Christ, by their behaviour as sons of the bridechamber. They were to be tested under two very diverse conditions, the bridegroom present and the bridegroom absent: conditions which still exist; for Christ is always present with His servants, and He is also absent from them.

Sons of the bridechamber were exempt from all fasting. No one had any right whatever to stop them from enjoying the good things which the bridegroom provided. Whatever he lavished upon them was theirs to take and use; and true sons of the bridechamber would do so regardless of the outside world.

This gives us the first test of fitness for being amongst those friends of Christ who have come at His call to make people ready for His coming; to make them fit to take part in the great marriage supper of the Lamb when He comes for His bride, the Church. The Bridegroom present with them means the pouring upon them of precious spiritual gifts, the riches of His grace, the treasures of the kingdom of God. The work of helping the infirmities of others calls for strength, strength unfailling; and the man has therefore to be one who daily renews his strength by being with Christ; one who lets nothing stop him from feeding upon the food which Christ supplies, from using freely the means of grace which He has given.

The second test was when the bridegroom was taken away from them. His being taken away does not mean that the gathering was broken up, and that they all went back again to earn their own living. They were still there in the bridegroom's house, as sons of the bridechamber, depending upon him for everything; neither providing for themselves, nor troubling themselves whether there would be enough or not; but, little or much, living upon what he gave them. In such a case, food would run short; and as long as they remained true to the bridegroom, fasting would be their lot. It is needless to say that, when Jesus returned to heaven, He did not cease to supply His servants with

their spiritual food; so that this part of His answer refers to the bodily privations which those who still remain true to the Bridegroom, and still live as sons of His bride-chamber, must expect to endure. Not frequent fastings, but a lifelong fast was to be their lot; so that suffering privations, living in poverty, and bearing it all as true sons of the bridechamber should, forms the second mark of fitness to be amongst those servants of Christ who help the infirmities of others. It is plain that people who cannot cheerfully forgo pleasant things of this world for the sake of Jesus and His work, will be of little use for influencing others to forgo pleasures which have enslaved them.

The key to the rest of the section is furnished by the prayers which the pupils of John used to make. They were learning to tread in their master's steps, and make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him; so they used to make "supplications." In this too they were unfit to serve as models for the pupils of Christ; and it was to guard His pupils against mistakes which John's were making, and to show them what they were to make the burden of their supplications, that the rest of this section was spoken. It is made up of a parable drawn from a marriage feast: from the garments which the guests wore; from the bottles in which the wine was kept, and from that which also had to be taken into account, the slow-changing tastes of men. Jesus, as the Bridegroom, was teaching them so that they might act as His servants and prepare for His coming.

The first part of the parable is about the kind of garment to be worn at the wedding-feast. It represents the standard of fitness to which people are to be raised to be ready for the Lord when He comes.

The standard of good living at that time was the strict keeping of the laws of Moses as elaborated by the traditions of the elders; with the addition, in John's case, of the rules which he gave those who received his baptism of repentance.

In neither case did it reach the standard which those pupils of Christ were to make their own.

Two garments were set before them from which to choose; an old one, and a new. It was not a simple case of taking one and leaving the other; for there was another way of dealing with them, the effects of which were shown them in the parable by a picture of an old garment with a strangely unsuitable patch, and a new one disfigured by a gap, the place where a piece had been cut out. The new garment was ruined, and the old one was such a strange medley, that it was out of place anywhere, above all at a marriage feast. No one, they were told, would treat garments like that; neither were they to treat the things thus for which the garments stood.

The old garment was the standard of fitness which had been so long in use. Lives modelled upon that could never be raised to the height required by Jesus; for the garment in the parable was plainly imperfect, needed patching in fact, and could not possibly make the wearers fit for the marriage feast. That old standard of life was unfit for what He wanted His people to become; nor could it be made right by merely adding to it from the model which He gave.

The new garment was the standard of fitness set by Jesus Himself, that which all who prepared people for His coming had to make their aim; a new and perfect robe, which covered all faults, failings, and imperfections, and made the wearers fit for His coming. Not that they were to seek to hide either their own infirmities, or those of His people: for in the kingdom of God all is sincerity and truth; and that new garment is the outshining of the state within. It was for that that the supplications of Jesus' pupils had to be made; supplications about their conduct, rules, aims and so forth in life, so that they themselves might be what He would have them make His people be—fit according to the standard which He, and He alone, had set.

In the next part of the parable there is again a choice



between the old and the new; and again the old is put aside. Two kinds of wine-skins are pictured, the used and the unused: the old wine-skins bursting asunder, and the wine pouring out; the fresh skins full of wine. It was the beginning of their equipment for the actual doing of this part of the Christ-work of helping the infirmities of the weak. No one, they were told, would use old wine-skins for storing new wine: it must be put into wine-skins, fresh and supple, which will hold it in safety, ready for use when needed.

The wine in the parable would be that which the bridegroom had provided for the strengthening and refreshing of those who came. It was new wine, full of strength and energy; and was thus a fit emblem of the strength and power which servants of Christ were to give to those who came to be healed of their weaknesses.

The bottles were the means used by the bridegroom for ensuring a supply of wine for the guests whenever they needed it; so that what was said about them in the parable showed those pupils of Christ what their supplications for themselves had to be if they would be always ready and able to give spiritual help and strength to those who needed it, and thus deliver them from evil. Old wine-skins, stiff and unable to adapt themselves to the forces within, were useless for the bridegroom's purpose; and so were men of like natures for the service of Christ as the Bridegroom. To act as vessels of healing for Him, receiving the power for which they made supplications and getting the weak to partake of it, they needed natures like the fresh wine-skins, tender, willing, unselfish; always to be depended upon to serve as bearers of good to others, as doers of good to others; and for such things also they would have to make their supplications to God.

The last part of the parable recalled something which must have been a familiar sight at wedding-feasts; men coming in to the feast, and not wanting to join with the rest in drinking the new wine that was there, because the

taste of the old wine, which they had been drinking, was still with them. Not that any mention of wine is made here. It would only have confused this part of the parable with the last, and hidden its meaning: which is, that indulging in the pleasures and ways of the old life in the world spoils the liking for the pure pleasures and ways of the new life in the kingdom of God; that indulging in old habits spoils the taste for new ways.

There was a double lesson for those pupils of Christ in that saying, "No one having drunk old desireth new: for he saith, The old is good." It taught them what they were to expect when trying, as servants of the Bridegroom, to prepare for His coming: how slow people would be to give up their old ways and likings; how hard they would cling to their old habits and infirmities, and still account them good; and what great patience would be needed in dealing with them. And it also taught them about themselves: how carefully they would have to keep themselves unspotted from the world, if they were always to be in a fit state to do their duty towards those whom the Bridegroom would call to the feast, those whom He would entrust to them to make ready for His coming. Their supplications would therefore be not only for the people, but also for themselves; that they might be kept free from all that blights the liking for the new life in the kingdom of God, and be enabled to bear patiently with those who are so slow to be moved.

## c. 1.

## LORD OF THE SABBATH

## vi. 1-5. Plucking grain on the sabbath.

In the two opening sections of the chapter, both the person who was being used as a sample case of the beginning of the preparation of Helpers of Jesus, and he who was being used in the same way for His Messengers, addressed Him as their Lord: and as the Lord, the Head and Ruler of all, He is represented in the two closing illustrations introduced by the words "And it came to pass on a second first sabbath."

When Moses was teaching the people about their place in the world, he told them about God's doings as the Creator; arranging his lesson in days of creation, and closing with the sabbath. The evangelist in teaching people, such as Theophilus, about their place in the Church, told them about Jesus as its Creator; arranging his lesson also as if it were about a day of creation, and winding up with the sabbath. On the first sabbath the things created went on in the course marked out for them: but not by themselves. They were always upheld by the Creator, and were always under His rule and guidance; for He was the Lord of the sabbath. On this second first sabbath the bodies created by Jesus also go on in the course marked out for them, and do it by His help and under His guidance as the Lord of the sabbath.

In the first creation, man was made in the likeness of God; and the rules and directions which God gave when He blessed and sanctified the sabbath were to enable him to live as men made in His image ought to live. In this second creation, men were being made in the likeness of Jesus, and it is as the Giver of rules and directions for enabling them to live as men made in His likeness ought to live, that He is now being pictured.

Led by Him into a field of grain on that second first sub-

bath, those whom He was training for service in the kingdom of God were enjoying themselves by plucking the ears, rubbing out the grain in their hands, and eating it, when they were reproved by the Pharisees, the strict upholders of the law as given through Moses. In the eyes of the Pharisees, it was forbidden food that the pupils of Jesus were eating: for, in order to be eaten, it had to be plucked and rubbed in the hands; and reaping and threshing were not lawful upon the sabbath day. But there was something which those Pharisees did not know, and the overlooking of it made them unfit to be patterns for the servants of Christ: and that was, the part which Jesus had in saying what the laws and ways of the kingdom of God should be. What that part was was taught by the rest of the scene, where the pupils of Christ, turning their eyes away from men, fixed them upon their Master whilst He showed them Himself in the light in which they were forever to regard Him.

He took a parallel case, that of David, before he entered into his kingdom, providing for his followers, the sharers of his privations and dangers, destitute, hungry, distressed, persecuted. Although the shew-bread was to be eaten in the holy place, and by none but the sons of Aaron, he not only took and ate of it himself, but also gave it to those who were with him, and they did eat. What they had eaten was forbidden food, and yet they were held to be guiltless: for he who had given it to them, and had made them partakers with himself, was the Lord's anointed. And those followers of the Son of David learned that they too were guiltless of breaking the sabbath, because He Who had led them into that field of grain upon the sabbath day to satisfy their hunger thus, was the Christ, the Lord's Anointed; and the day which He had made "delightsome" to them was still holy to God. The Bridegroom was with them, and none could compel them to fast.

Then He summed up the lesson for them in a way that would show them clearly His position with regard to the

service which He was creating in the kingdom of God, that service of which they themselves were the beginning. "The Son of man is Lord of the sabbath"; Lord, not merely of the sabbath days, but of all that the first sabbath represented, and therefore of all that that second first sabbath represented: that as the rules and regulations for the well-being and happiness of men made in the likeness of God were God's to make or to change at His will, so it was with the rules and regulations for the men whom Jesus was making in His own image. It would be for Him, and for Him alone, to say what would preserve the happiness of the service which He had created, and what would destroy it; and what He decreed stood fast whether it agreed with the views of men or not.

### c. 2.

#### FITTING FOR WORK

##### vi. 6-11. Restoring the withered hand.

The special work of the body of servants that Jesus was raising up to be His messengers was to help people to become what God meant them to be. One part of it was to set the bruised at liberty; cheering and encouraging them, and giving them the strength which they lacked—the new wine of the parable: and it was to show Theophilus what they needed for doing this that the evangelist set before him this second scene which took place on the sabbath, the day set apart for the uplifting and ennobling of mankind.

Jesus was teaching in the synagogue. His synagogue teaching to which reference has so far been made, was about the Christ and His work of bringing in the acceptable year of the Lord: and the teaching which He was then giving was evidently of the same kind; for the scribes and Pharisees, who heard Him, were watching to see if He would put His words into practice by healing the man with the withered hand who was there.

The Pharisees, as before, stood for unworthy shepherds

of God's people. This time, as was pointed out by the mention of the scribes, they were acting as guardians of the law of God which none might alter; condemners of all who broke it. But they were hard and unfeeling; fast bound by their rigid interpretation of the letter of the law, and utterly regardless of the man's welfare: living examples of the old wine-skins which were so useless for holding the supply of the new wine.

It was the man's right hand that was withered; his working hand; the emblem of power. The lack of something had dried it up, and made him unable to do his work. He both represented those whom the servants of Jesus were to make ready for Him by quickening and strengthening them, and was also a type of the servants themselves when unable to act as suppliers of that quickening and strengthening power: and it is as a type of such men that he is being used here; as the evangelist pointed out by telling Theophilus how Jesus, knowing the thoughts of those scribes and Pharisees, made him stand out in the midst, as if he were one of them, an emblem of their crippled state. What was blighting all their efforts to serve God by uplifting His people was pointed out by Jesus in the questions that He asked: "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good, or to do harm? To save life, or to destroy it?"

Of the two questions, the first had to do with a motive that the Pharisees lacked, the absence of which withers the power to do this work for God; the second with what had to be the great aim of the messengers of Jesus, an aim which men like the Pharisees had lost sight of altogether. It was for people to have life, and have it abundantly, that Jesus had come; and that aim His messengers had always to have in view. To attain that end, their ruling motive in doing their work had to be the good of others; and it was that motive which sanctified that healing on the sabbath day.

Looking round about upon them all, as if to test each one of them by putting the questions to him personally, and

waiting for the answer which did not come, He told the man to stretch forth his hand.

By the sight of that man standing there before Jesus with his withered right hand stretched out, having done, as far as he could, what Jesus had told him to do, the pupils of Jesus were shown, in a figure, how they could be freed from whatever it might be that was drying them up, and keeping them from being "fresh wine-skins" for Him; for the man's hand was restored, and he became able to do his work for God.

The scribes and Pharisees, still types of unworthy servants of God, were filled with foolishness; the state of those who try to do God's work without keeping that great rule of service which shows itself in doing good at all times, and in all places, to all who are in need.

With Jesus surrounded by enemies talking together about what they might do to Him, the scene closes.

## CHAPTER D.

VI. 12—VII. 17.

(a). vi. 12-19. (b). 20-29. (c). viii. 1-17.

(a).

vi. 12-19. And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God.

And when it was day, he called his disciples: and he chose from them twelve, whom also he named apostles; Simon, whom he also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip and Bartholomew, and Matthew and Thomas, and James the son of Alphæus, and Simon which was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, which was the traitor.

And he came down with them, and stood on a level place, and a great multitude of his disciples, and a great number of the people from all Judæa and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and be healed of their diseases.

And they that were troubled with unclean spirits were healed.

And all the multitude sought to touch him: for power came forth from him, and healed them all.

(b). 1.

20-26. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the same manner did their fathers unto the prophets.



But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

Woe unto you, ye that are full now! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you, ye that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets.

## 2.

27-35. But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.

To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloke withhold not thy coat also.

Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive again as much. But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil.

## 3.

36-38. Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

And judge not, and ye shall not be judged.

And condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.

Release, and ye shall be released.

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

## 4.

39-42. And he spake also a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into a pit?

The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Or how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

## 5.

43-49. For there is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit; nor again a corrupt tree that bringeth forth good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Every one that cometh unto me, and heareth my words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it: because it had been well builded.

But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great.

## (c) 1.

vii. 1-10. After he had ended all his sayings in the ears of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and at the point of death. And when he heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant. And they, when they came to Jesus, besought him earnestly, saying, He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him: for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue. And Jesus went with them.

And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And when Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned and said unto the multitude that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole.

## 2.

11-17. And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went to a city called Nain; and his disciples went with him, and a great multitude. Now when he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, there was carried out one that was dead, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

And he came nigh and touched the bier: and the bearers stood still.

And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. And fear took hold on all: and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is arisen among us: and, God hath visited his people.

And this report went forth concerning him in the whole of Judæa, and all the region round about.

## CHAPTER D. VI. 12.—VII. 17.

### WHAT JESUS BEGAN TO TEACH

a. vi. 12-19. b. vi. 20-49. c. vii. 1-17.

a.

vi. 12-19. *Introduction.* The next stage in the framework which the evangelist was building up as an assurance for Theophilus was introduced by a strange series of scenes. First he was shown Jesus upon a mountain, praying; praying through all the dark hours of the night until the dawn of day. Then he was shown Him, as the new day broke, calling His pupils to Him, and choosing them one by one, until there stood at His side a band of twelve. After that he was shown Jesus coming down from the mountain with the twelve, and standing with them on a level place; having near them a great crowd of the pupils from whom they had been drawn, and before them numbers of people who had come up, as it were, out of the darkness.

The key to those scenes was furnished by the opening words, "And it came to pass in these days that He went out into the mountain to pray." The days were those of the last chapter; days of creation, in which Jesus, the Creator of the Church, had called its service into being, and, as Lord of the sabbath, had begun to lay down rules for it: so that the note showed Theophilus that the evangelist was carrying on his account of that creation a stage further. It would moreover have shown him that he was following the same plan which Moses had adopted in his use of "days of creation," when, for example, he gave the creation of

light as the work of one day, and the calling into being of light-giving bodies the work of another; and that, having told him about the creation of the service of the Church, he was going to tell him about the calling into being of the servant bodies.

A well-known prophecy was about to be fulfilled, that of Is. 2: 2, 3 (Sep. Ver.) which begins thus: "For in the last days the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, and the house of God shall be upon the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall come unto it." The "last days" were the era which would begin at the coming of the Christ; and, as the evangelist has shown, the Christ had already come. The mountain to which Jesus went was evidently one specially chosen and used by Him; and the note was the same as saying that Jesus was fulfilling that prophecy by going out, as the Lord, to His mountain to set up the house of God, His Church, as the gathering place for all nations, the storehouse of supply for all their spiritual needs; and to make arrangements for them to be brought into it.

The account of the beginning of the formation of the first body of men-servants in the house of God is arranged as if it too were an act of creation; something which could only be done by God Himself. Instead, however, of merely being told about the evening and the morning, Theophilus was given an insight into the mystery of the night, and taught something about the unseen working of the creative power. "He went out into the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when the day came, He called unto Himself His pupils, and chose from them twelve." All through the night Jesus prayed; and, by that night-long prayer, established what Theophilus had been taught about the place and importance of prayer in the ordination of men for service in the household of God.

Only part of what he had to know about the founding of this class of servants was told him here. In this treatise

such details are not given all at once; but piece by piece, as the evangelist was able to fit them into the plan he was following. As this part of the treatise was to be about the beginning of the things which Jesus did and taught, he has only given the beginning of its formation; namely, the calling together, to the place of prayer, of those who were being trained, and the choosing of as many as were needed.

It was the beginning of the fulfilment of another prophecy that Theophilus was now being shown. Of the various views of the Christ of which that wondrous portrait in the Old Testament is made up, one stands out from all the others in unmistakable clearness; the prophecy of Moses in Deut. 18: 15, "A prophet, like unto me, shall the Lord thy God raise up unto thee out of thy brethren." Besides ruling the people in God's name, and having to intercede for them, and teach them, and train them, Moses had also to awaken them to such a sense of duty and zeal that they would willingly go forward, as God's soldiers and servants, and conquer a heathen land for Him; and therefore, according to the prophecy, the Prophet like unto him would have the same kind of work to do. But the likeness did not end there. There was also the way in which Moses had to carry on his God-given work. At God's command he raised up three bodies of men to help him in the several parts of that work; and the Prophet like unto him would therefore do the same.

Jesus began this first branch of the service in the kingdom of God with twelve men; and by so doing, fixed for all time the nature of the order which He was creating. That number was its birth-mark. What it meant is learned from Deut. 1: 22-25, where we read that Moses, in obedience to God's command given in Num. 13:3 (Sep. Ver.), chose twelve men to do two things: to go as pioneers to the heathen land which was to be conquered; and also to stir up the people, quickening the hearts of those who were cold to the cause, and were longing for the things of Egypt, cheering and encouraging the hopeless and faint-hearted,

and making them ready to act as soldiers of God, zealous to do His will.

When the Prophet like unto Moses, after a night of prayer to God, formed His first band also of twelve, it was to show that they were to help Him to do the same kind of work. They too were to be pioneers of His armies; not, however, in the conquest of a little heathen land, but of the whole world: they too were to go amongst His people, awakening those whose hearts were cold and faint, stirring, cheering, encouraging them until they became eager to act as His soldiers against evil, full of zeal for Him and His great cause. No matter to what size this body of servants might grow, its marks would always be the same as those which distinguished the band of twelve with which it was begun. Its members were to be pioneers of the kingdom of God; and their distinctive work amongst His people that first great work of Jesus as the Christ, awakening, encouraging, winning people to God and His service, preaching good tidings to the poor.

These twelve, the evangelist informed Theophilus in a short note, Jesus also called apostles, or messengers. Not that the name belonged to this order of His servants. It was merely mentioned at this stage as having also been given to these men, in order that it might serve as a trace-name, and enable their career to be plainly shown without obscuring something else in the treatise. The opportunity was also taken here of informing Theophilus that Judas Iscariot was the traitor; not as a piece of news, but so that it might be known that whenever they were cited in a body as witnesses to whom the reader could go, the one with the branded name was always to be excepted.

In the last of the scenes they came down from the mountain with Jesus, and stood with Him on a level place whilst He began to teach them, and many others of His pupils, about supplying the needs of the people gathered there before Him.

The explanation of this scene begins with the names of some of the places from which those people had come—Judah and Jerusalem, and the sea coasts of Tyre and Sidon. They are the places spoken of in Joel 3, the chapter which tells of the turning again of the captivity of the people; and the mention of them meant that God had visited and wrought redemption for His people; and that the scene which Theophilus was being shown was Jesus, as the Horn of salvation in the house of David, arranging for the service in His kingdom, and teaching His pupils how to go before His face, as Zacharias had foretold that the child John would do, and provide for His people, whom He had delivered, the salvation of which the prophets had spoken.

The work, which Jesus would have His servants do, was represented by the needs of the people who stood there before Him. Those needs the evangelist has divided into two parts, corresponding to the first two divisions of the Christ-work. First there were the needs of those who came to hear, and be healed of their “diseases”; that is, of the fruits of evil living from which they were suffering. The work of the twelve, as pioneers of the kingdom of God and helpers of Him Who was anointed to preach good tidings to the poor, was to supply those needs by telling them the good tidings of the kingdom of God, and bringing cleansing for their sinful natures. Then came the needs of those who were beset by unclean spirits. Attending to them, and relieving them, formed another branch of the work of the Christ, that of proclaiming release to captives, the recovering of sight to the blind, and the setting at liberty them that are bruised. That was His work as the Messenger of God; and Jesus prepared men to carry it on for Him by training them to become His messengers.

Of all that great body of pupils of Christ there on that level place, not one was able to supply even the least of those needs. Not even the twelve could do anything; for, as yet, they had had no power given them. Those who would be



healed had to press on until they touched Jesus Himself. He was the sole source of the power by which the work in God's kingdom was to be done. Only by power received from Him would His servants be able to do their work; and it was to fit them to receive and use that power that the directions contained in this chapter were given.

The plan which the evangelist has followed in his outline of these directions is taken from the song of Zacharias: the position which Jesus fills being that which the Child, Who was to be born, would fill; whilst the duties for which He was preparing His servants are those which the child John was to perform. In that outline of the Baptist's career his work as a pioneer of the kingdom of God is passed over; and the prophecy is devoted to what he would do as the prophet of the Most High who was to go before the face of the Lord. In like manner, in this chapter, the evangelist has passed over the pioneers of the kingdom of God, and has devoted it especially to those who, like John, were to be prophets of the Most High. It opens with some general rules for service in the kingdom of God, and then goes on to rules for those whom Jesus would make His messengers, and send to speak in His name.

*Summary.* He began by showing Theophilus Jesus telling His pupils what they were to expect in His service. Like as the Creator had done in the beginning for those whom He had made in His likeness, so Jesus did for those whom He was making in His likeness. He set before them two ways, the way of happiness and the way of woe, and left it to them to make the choice.

Then he showed him Jesus speaking to those who heard His call, and were willing to become His followers in the great work of giving God's people salvation from their enemies; and the rule of service that He gave them was the law of love.

After that he told him of the special directions, bearing upon the three parts of His commission as the Prophet, that

Jesus gave them to prepare them for going before His face and making people ready for Him in the same three ways which had been laid down for John the Baptist; namely, by bringing forgiveness to sinners, light to those in darkness, and help to those who could not walk in the way of peace.

The two closing illustrations showed him Jesus as Christ the Lord, the Head of the Church in His greatness and His power.

b. 1.

THE CHOICE

*God's purpose.* i. 68-70. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel . . . the world began.

*The Choice.* vi. 20-26. The blessings and woes.

Each of the five sections of this chapter is connected with the corresponding section of the foregoing chapter, so that this section has to do with the beginnings of the service of the kingdom of God. The key to it is furnished by the first of the two illustrations which closed that chapter; the one in which Jesus, as the Lord of the sabbath, was shown providing for the happiness of those whom He was training for His service. That account was given in such a way as to show that what He was then doing corresponded with what the Creator had done in the garden of Eden for those whom He had called into existence; and the account in this section is also arranged to suggest the same idea:—the state of life, divided into four heads, which was to be a source of happiness to the servants whom He was calling into existence, and through them to all mankind, recalling the river, dividing into four heads, which was to be a source of happiness to God's workers in the garden, and thence to the world around. Moreover, like as it was in Eden, two things were set before them, one of which would aid them in their happy life of service, whilst the other would destroy their usefulness altogether; and it lay with them to make the choice.

And a strange choice it was that those people heard Him set before His pupils. Everything that the world regarded as aids to happiness, and as the crown of success, Jesus denounced; and everything that He wanted them to have was, in the eyes of the world, wretchedness and misery. Poverty, hunger, mourning, persecution He counted blessings; whilst He mourned for His pupils who had riches, fulness, mirth, and renown.

The four blessings and the four woes form two parallel columns, in which each blessing pairs with a corresponding woe. Each column is divided into three parts; the first of which had to do with the state of the pupils generally, the second with the state of some of them at that very time, and the third with something then in the future. The things of which He approved were all of them things which would have been the lot of the men who were with David, the Lord's anointed, and remained faithful to him in the days of his obscurity.

As the Chosen One through Whom God was visiting His people, Jesus lifted up His eyes upon that great multitude of His pupils, the material from which He was forming men to carry on the work of redemption, as if to see what was fit for His use and what was not; and then, by what He said, confirmed what Theophilus had been taught about life in the service of Christ.

Poverty must have been the common lot of adherents of David who were true to him in the days of his affliction; and it is with poverty and riches that the first pair of these blessings and woes has to do. It was to His pupils generally that Jesus was speaking, to those from whom every branch of service in the kingdom of God was being drawn, and His first words to them were, "Blessed are ye poor!" Their happiness in God's service depended upon their letting go entirely their hold upon the things of earth. Whatever earthly wealth they might seem to have, it was not their own: they neither called it their own property, nor treated

it as such; but as being held in trust. As pupils of Him, Who though He were rich, yet for the sake of human beings had become poor, they had given up everything for the sake of others, and were living for others. It was to such people as they that the kingdom of God would be entrusted. Like as an earthly king gave to his servants, in their several capacities, his kingdom with all its treasures, so to them would be given by Jesus the kingdom of God with all its spiritual treasures.

“But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.” This word has been used before: but the consolation of Israel for which Simeon looked was found in the Christ, and in the establishment of the kingdom of God; those over whom the Lord mourned were finding theirs in the things of this world, and not in Him and the kingdom He was establishing. They were like adherents of David, who, in his time of trial, ceased to take any part in helping him to get the kingdom rather than forfeit their wealth. Living for the things of earth, their hearts were set there; and they were useless for service in the kingdom of God.

The rest of the blessings and woes have to do with those two classes of servants about which Theophilus had been told in the foregoing chapter. The first of those classes was made up, for the time being, of the twelve; the men who had forsaken all to be with the Horn of salvation Whom God had raised up in the house of His servant David. As they stood with Him upon that level place, His companions in the toils and troubles which were to lead to His kingship, He spoke about the life on which they were entering, of what He approved, and of what He disapproved; and the things of which He approved were things undergone by David’s men who were with him when he set out on the path which led, in the end, to his kingship. “He was an hungred,” and they, faithful to their leader, shared in his lot, and were hungry too; and the gloom of the outcast life

before them lay heavily upon them. Suffering for the sake of being with Him is also a mark of Jesus' faithful servants, His true comrades; and those of His pupils who were then hungering and mourning, Jesus declared to be blessed.

It is plain that any of David's men, who were faring well at that time and were happy and gay, could not have been with him on the occasion spoken of, and were not really faithful to him. And Jesus held it to be the same with those who had become His men, and mourned over them. "Woe unto you, ye that are full now!" "Woe unto you, ye that laugh now!"

When David came into his kingdom, all the conditions mentioned would have been reversed; and those who had shared in his troubles would have been bountifully and kindly treated, whilst the others would have been made to suffer for their falseness. That same kind of after-treatment Jesus held before those to whom He was speaking; encouraging them to faithful comradeship with Himself by the promise of the happy time when hunger would be turned into fulness, and mourning to joy; and warning those who chose present comfort and pleasure by the doom of being made to suffer the very things the dislike of which had led to their unfaithfulness.

The last blessing and woe both lay in the future, and would come to them when they had entered the second class of servants in the kingdom of God, those whose beginning was touched upon in the account of the messenger of Christ; messengers of the Prophet like unto Moses. Like the holy prophets, of whom Zacharias in his inspired utterance spoke as having made known the God-given office and work of the unborn Child, this class of servants would also have to tell about Him. They too had their choice to make. Like as any of David's followers who were sent to speak for him would have had to suffer persecution from the people of Saul, so would they when they spoke for the Son of David. Neither the things of God, nor the servants of God, would be ac-

ceptable; and they would have to choose between clashing with the ways of men by being true to their Sender, and being false to Him by taking the smooth and easy way of saying only such things as men would like to hear. Their real happiness would lie in being unwelcome messengers to such people; in being hated, kept at a distance, upbraided and cast out; for they would know then that they were treading in the steps of the true prophets of God, and had joined the ranks of those who were faithful unto death.

b. 2.

GENERAL RULES FOR MESSENGERS

*God's purpose.* i. 71. Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.

*His prophet's work.* i. 76. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet . . . His ways.

*Rules of service.* vi. 27-35. The law of love.

The second thing which Jesus had begun to do was to raise up a band of messengers: the second thing which He began to teach was about the rules which His messengers would have to follow when sent by Him to people such as those before them who were seeking to touch Him and receive His healing power. His words were addressed to those "who hear": a peculiar expression recalling what Samuel was told to say in order to show that he was ready and willing to become the messenger of God; "Speak for Thy servant heareth." It was to men who were ready and willing to become the messengers of Jesus that the following rules were given; men who were ready to bear the ill-treatment and evil speaking which, according to the last of the blessings, would be the lot of true prophets of the Lord.

In following out his plan of gradually building up the framework of the things in which Theophilus had been instructed, the evangelist had already told him something about those messengers and their service. Their type was

John the Baptist, a prophet of the Most High; and like him they would have to go before the face of the Lord to make ready His ways. The first stage through which they would have to pass in entering His service had been dealt with in the account of the cleansing of the leper: but only in part. There was something lacking in that leper; for, although he was sent to testify for Jesus, he was not allowed to speak for Him. Before men were fit to speak for Jesus, and prepare the way for His coming as the Messenger of salvation, they had to carry out the instruction contained in this present section.

The section is led up to by the second of the closing illustrations of the last chapter; that which wound up with Jesus, the Lord of the sabbath, the Perfecter of the service of the kingdom of God, surrounded by foes. In that character He now appears, laying down leading rules of life and service for the servants whom He was raising up. Like Himself, they too would be surrounded by foes: so He made the starting-point of the rules, their treatment of enemies; and their fitness to act as prophets of the Most High to depend upon the way in which they would be affected by ill-treatment and ill-will.

In the synagogue He had made doing good to others a work of the sabbath, and the mainspring of those whom He was forming in His likeness: so we find that the first rule of their life was love. The love of Jesus, which they would have to voice, sought all, both foe and friend. It embraced all; and would save all: wherefore the love, which He made the key to the gateway of His service, was love of the very highest and most unselfish type; a real, living love, which had nothing of self in it; not even the hope of love returned: for it was love for enemies.

The three practical workings of this rule of love which were set before them bore directly upon the three parts of the work which they would have to do for Jesus: upon the use of the three great treasures entrusted to them; the

balm of God's mercy, the knowledge of His will, and the power of prayer. Nothing whatever was to keep them from seeking to bestow those treasures upon others; neither hatred, cursing, nor hostility of any sort. They had to be men who had the heart of Jesus; whose rule of life was, by the grace of God, to do good to those who hated them, bless those who cursed them, and pray for those who wantonly abused them—deeds which were not only tokens of the indwelling of that love of which Jesus spoke, but were also sources of life and strength to that love.

Their second rule of life was to be meekness; meekness under actual ill-treatment, violence and robbery: such meekness as would be looked upon as forswearing their manhood; for it was the kind that would turn the other cheek to the smiter, and would offer no resistance to the spoiler who was stripping them of all and treating them like condemned outlaws.

Those first two rules taught them what they had to be if they would be numbered amongst those from whom Christ's messengers would be chosen; the last three were to make them fit to act as His messengers. They would have to go before the face of the Lord, the face of Him Who is the Channel of God's goodness, through Whom all the wants of God's people are supplied; and to act as His representatives, they had to be men who would give to every one that asked of them, and would not ask their goods back again from those who took them away. That was what may be called their rule of office. It meant a complete setting aside of self, of rights and dues; an utter self-effacement. The needs of others, and the supplying of them, were to be their chief concern. They were to act as storehouses of the gifts of God; living storehouses, to which His people were free to come at any time and get all their needs supplied. But even that did not fully teach them what they had to be in order to stand before that multitude as representatives of Jesus. There still remained that which was symbolized by the last



part of the rule about not asking to have their goods back from those who took them away. The state which this betokened was that of a person who set such store upon the well-being of others, upon their needs being supplied, that he sacrificed all claim to his own property, gave everything up to them, and let them make free of his goods without even asking his leave; caring nothing so long as they got what they needed.

Next came the rule of service: the rule which was to be their guide in going to people and giving them what their needs required. "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." To carry out that rule they would have to view everything they were sent to do from the other side, from the view-point of the person to whom it was to be done; and by putting themselves in his place, see what they ought to do, and how they ought to do it. From their own needs they would learn what the needs of others were; from what they themselves would be thankful for, they would learn what others would be thankful for; and from the way in which they themselves would like to be treated, the way in which others were to be treated.

The last of the rules taught them what ought to be their conduct as they lived and moved amongst the people to whom they would be sent; and may therefore be called the rule of behaviour. People have a right to expect more from servants of the Lord than from others; and to look for the very highest standard of behaviour from those who go before His face. What they have the right to expect is what the Lord Himself set as the standard of His messengers' behaviour, that of sons of the Most High.

Every race has its own distinctive marks by which it can be known; its own type of beauty: and it is about the beauty of the race of the children of God, those bearing the likeness of Jesus, that this section speaks. True messengers of Christ cannot rest content with going on the same as before they became His messengers; leading a life no better

than others. What charm, or winsomeness, would His messengers have, He asked, if they only did what sinners did, and loved those who loved them; did good to those who did good to them; and lent to those from whom they hoped to receive: always getting something or other in return? They had to rise far above that; rise above the very highest level of human nature, and love their enemies; do their enemies good; and lend, never despairing: deeds which are marks of sons of the Most High, Whose nature it is to be kind even to the unthankful and to the evil.

### b. 3.

#### MESSENGERS OF MERCY

*God's purpose.* i. 72. To show mercy towards our fathers.

*His prophet's work.* i. 77, 78. To give knowledge of salvation . . . tender mercy of our God.

*Rules of service.* vi. 36-38. Children of the merciful God.

According to the prophecy of Zacharias, one of the reasons why God raised up the Horn of salvation was "to show mercy to our fathers." The fathers themselves were dead and gone; but God's purpose would be fulfilled by showing mercy to their children: for the lives of the fathers were regarded as being continued in their children. The mercy was that which Jesus showed at the foot of the mountain to those who came to be healed of their "diseases," the punishments for their sins: for it was as the Messenger of the mercy of God that He stood there that day, and it was as the Messenger of the mercy of God that He was laying down these rules for the men who were to go forth for Him and give to people the knowledge of salvation in the remission of their sins.

The five rules, which the evangelist has selected, correspond with the five parts of his account of the forgiveness of the paralysed man. That account opened with the scene in the house where Jesus was teaching, and the power of the Lord was with Him to heal. Without were many, like the

multitude now crowding around the Saviour, who wanted to hear and be healed of their diseases: within were men who ought to have been ready and eager to tell them what they wanted to hear, but, instead of going, sat there pitiless and unmoved. And the first direction that the Saviour gave His pupils was that they were to be merciful. Mercy was the first of the attributes mentioned in Ex. 34: 6 when God began to declare His nature; and for them to act as messengers of His Son, they had to be God's true children, full of pity, pity for the sufferers, the sinners, and the lost. Unceasingly it had to be present with them, forming part of their very nature: a mark of their fitness for the work of going before the face of the Lord to give salvation by the remission of sins.

The rest of the directions were given as if to men who could see the sinners, to whom they were to go, standing there before them in all their vileness. First came a rule, the close following of which would furnish another mark of their fitness to be messengers of mercy: and that rule was, "Judge not." The Saviour did not want for His service men who sat in judgment upon others; setting themselves to distinguish between the bad and the good in order to part them the one from the other, and shut out the fallen from the kingdom of God, from the radiance of His mercy. Men who acted like that could not prepare the way for the Messenger of the mercy of God. To prepare His way, they had to be like those who took up the paralysed man, and sought to bring him into the house where people were with Jesus; and to be like them they had to "judge not." But the temptation to shut out the fallen was so natural and so great, that the Saviour guarded against it by adding to the rule a warning, "That ye be not judged." They themselves were sinners; and if they decided that because a man was a sinner he should be separated from Christ and His people, by that judgment God would deal with them, and separate them.

As the Bringer of the mercy of God it was that they were to serve Him; as the Fulfiller of the purpose of God to show mercy to our fathers by sinking their iniquities, and casting them into the depths of the sea, even all their sins (Micah 7: 19. Sep. Ver.): and the rule which they were to follow when acting for Him in that character was "Condemn not." Like as the bearers of the paralysed man had done, when, without a word, they laid the man down, just as he was, at the feet of Jesus, so were they to do. With regard to this too the warning came, that they were but sinners dealing with sinners; and that if they themselves would not be condemned of God, they were not to condemn the fallen.

John, as the prophet of the Most High, was to begin to prepare the ways of the Lord by giving people the knowledge of salvation in the remission of sins through the tender mercy of God. Those whom Jesus was instructing would have to continue that work by bringing the remission of sins itself to those who repented; and the rule which He gave them for their guidance in doing that work was "Release." And as they dealt with His people, so God would deal with them. On messengers of mercy His mercy would alight: for the Saviour's promise was "Release, and ye shall be released." The message of pardon, which came down on the paralysed man, rose also to those who brought him.

The scene in the house had closed with the bearers and the onlookers filled with amazement at what they had seen, and glorifying God: but there is more to be done for the forgiven than to rejoice over them. They need help; help to rise; help to bear the burden of the past; and as they go on their way, they need a loving welcome, kindness, and comfort: so the rule which Christ gave to those who were to serve Him in this work of salvation was "Give." To the very end He made them understand that they themselves were in like need with those to whom they would be sent, and that it was through the goodness and mercy which

they would show to the fallen, that goodness and mercy would come to themselves: for, as they treated others, so would they themselves be treated.

b. 4.

BEARERS OF LIGHT

*God's purpose.* i. 72. To remember His holy covenant.

*His prophet's work.* i. 78, 79. Whereby the dayspring . . . shadow of death.

*Rules of service.* vi. 39-42. Directions for light-givers.

It was still to those "who hear" that Jesus was speaking, preparing them for the next part of the work which He wanted done for Him. It was as the Dayspring from on high that He spake; the Dayspring Who, by the mercy of God, was to come to rule and do righteousness and judgement on the earth (Jer. 23: 5 Sep.Ver.), and through whom God would fulfil His holy covenant recorded in Jer. 38:33 (Sep.Ver) "I will surely put My laws into their mind, and write them on their hearts": and the part of Jesus' hearers would be to carry to those that sit in darkness and the shadow of death the light that He brought. In the synagogue at Nazareth He had referred to that work as proclaiming the recovering of sight to the blind; the spiritually blind; those who had lost the power of seeing and knowing the truth of God because, like the people in the introduction to the chapter, they were beset by unclean spirits.

Jesus taught by word of mouth and by deeds; not by writing. When He had gone, it would only be from their fellow-men that people would be able to learn about Him and the things which He had said and done; about His kingdom and its rules; and about the way to live. Hence the great need of directions for the guidance of those who, in time to come, would have to tell people about those things.

It certainly was not because of their clearness of vision, and deep insight into the will of God, that those whom He

was preparing had been chosen; for the directions which He gave them were such as would be given to men who were naturally unfit for the work. They are in the form of parabolic sayings, arranged so as to fit in with the career of a teacher-candidate who is passing from helpless blindness to perfect vision.

They begin with the pointed question, "Is a blind person able to guide a blind person? Will they not both fall into a pit?" It was useless for them to think of guiding others, unless they themselves were able to see the right way; able to see clearly where to walk, and where not to walk; able to know and understand God's will about the lives of His people. Whatever pitfall might be in their way, into that they would walk, leading their equally blind followers.

The first thing to be done by anyone who is to be a guide to others is to get rid of his own blindness and the cause of it. Yielding to any influence which is not of the Holy Spirit brings it on. So long as he was yielding to the greed for gain, Levi was blind, as far as his fitness for being a teacher of the law of God was concerned; and it was only when he met the gaze of Jesus, and yielded himself to Him, that the first mark of fitness for being a teacher of the law in the kingdom of God was his. He had fled the shadow of the world, and had entered into the light. His blindness had left him.

The next direction, the carrying out of which forms the second mark of fitness for becoming a teacher of the people of God, has to do with the standard which each one sets himself. "A pupil is not above his teacher; but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher." (The teacher is being regarded as the sole source of knowledge which his pupil has.) No teacher can raise his pupils above his own level, above what he himself is and knows. The greatest height to which the pupil can rise is that of his teacher. When the teacher's standard is low, that of his pupils is

also low; when he is in error, they also grow up in error. The standard of a teacher in the kingdom of God has to be the highest and most perfect standard that is to be found, the standard of Jesus Himself. Like Levi, calling together the publicans and sinners for them to be with Jesus and hear Him, the aim of all who would be teachers for Christ is to see that it is the word of Jesus Himself that they give their people, and not their own or anyone else's; that it is His interpretation of the law that they teach; that they themselves are simply mouthpieces of Him Whom the multitudes are wanting to hear when they come to the mountain of the Lord to be taught by God of His ways.

The rest of the directions were given as to men who had received the gift of sight, but something was keeping them from seeing clearly, and was blotting out a large part of every thing at which they looked. Before they would be fit to go forth as teachers of the people, making God's will known to them, and teaching them His holy word, all that marred their vision had to be taken away, and they themselves made able to see the truth in its entirety, clear and exact.

In the parable they were represented by the man with the beam in his eye. As if it were something which was naturally there, he took no notice of it, and thought himself and his own views perfect. Yet in spite of that darkening of vision, which made his views of things worse than useless, he was able and ready to detect trifling defects in others: just as the self-satisfied Pharisees had done, when, full of confidence in the correctness of their own knowledge of God's laws and of their own way of keeping them, they rebuked the pupils of Jesus for disregarding social distinctions, and eating and drinking with publicans and sinners.

Like physicians, who have to do with the sick, it would be the place of those whom Jesus was preparing, to tell people the soul's laws of health, the way of life; to show

them where they were going wrong; to point out to them how to escape from the evil which beset them, and to keep away from it. To undertake this without being clear about what they were to teach, or able to see clearly what the needs of the people were, would be as rank presumption as a man with a beam in his eye, and unaware of it, offering to take a mote out of his brother's eye. Such a one cannot possibly escape either telling people wrong, or setting people wrong.

Perfect clearness of vision has to be sought by everyone who teaches for Jesus, and each should help the others; but the search for faults and failings is to begin with the man himself, and not with his fellow-teachers. A fault-finder each one has indeed to be, looking for anything whatever that darkens the light of the truth, anything that keeps God's chosen ones from seeing clearly: but the one with whom he has to find fault is himself.

The man who sets himself to put another right before taking up his own case is, according to the great Teacher, a hypocrite; a fraud; unfit to call sinners to repentance; unfit to teach them the true and right way. He has to do what the Pharisees were unable to do, to own that it is possible for him to be wrong; and, crushing his pride, to set himself humbly to find out his own faults and failings, his wrong views and what causes them. He has to get rid, first of all, of whatever it is that is darkening the eyes of his own understanding: then he will be able to see clearly to deal with others, and set his brethren right; and be fit to be used for teaching the people of God, for recovering the sight of the spiritually blind.



## b. 5.

## GUIDES TO PEACE

*God's purpose.* i. 73-75. The oath which He sware . . . all our days.

*His prophet's work.* i. 79. To guide our feet into the way peace.

*Rules of service.* vi. 43-49. Directions for providing and building up.

The directions in the last section were to enable those who heard the voice of their Lord to act as His light-bearers, and show people the way in which they ought to walk. But their work was not to end there. People were not merely to be shown the way of life, and then left helpless, unable to walk along it; or told what to do, and then left alone to do it unaided. In the prophecy of Zacharias, the Child Who was to be born was also to fulfil God's oath that His people, being delivered out of the hand of their enemies, should serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all their days; and His forerunner was to guide their feet into the way of peace. So we find that those who heard the call of Jesus were also trained to be guides to peace: to guide people, not by simply pointing it out to them, but by taking the weakly by the hand, as it were, and helping them along that calm and happy way. That there would be no lack of work for them to do was shown by the fact that when the news of the leper had spread, and it was known that healing was to be had, it was in great multitudes that the people came to be healed of their weaknesses: so many there were that were afflicted with them.

It is clear that there can be no lasting peace for people afflicted with infirmities, those whom dread of failing in their heavenward struggle haunts. And there can be no peace at all when infirmities are given way to, and children of God sink helpless and ashamed: for then distress and sorrow come, misery and pain; a troubled heart; a hope-

less soul. To guide such people into the way of peace Christ's messengers have to be able to heal their weaknesses, and give them victory over the failings which keep them from walking in the paths of righteousness.

How men, who are themselves frail and weak, can get power and strength for others was explained to Theophilus in the introduction to the chapter, when he was shown the multitudes all seeking to touch the Saviour, because from Him the healing power came forth. It was by bringing people to Jesus, and by that only, that they would be able to serve Him in this work of healing, and provide them with the power they needed; and it was to guide them in doing this that the present instructions were given them. The key to their former preparation for this work had been given by the mention of fastings and prayers—the prayers having to do with the work itself, the fastings with their fitness for doing it—and the same key was evidently meant to do duty here; for we find that the first two sets of instructions have to do, in the main, with what they had to forgo in order to be fit for this part of the service of Christ, and the rest with the prayers by which it was to be done.

Having always to be on hand when needed, ready and able to help others, to cheer and strengthen them, the parabolic instruction given them about their first mark of fitness was drawn from fruit-bearing trees: trees to which people can come, and having eaten of the fruit, go on their way strengthened and refreshed. The point of view which they were made to take of themselves was that of the people in need looking for help; and they were made to see with the people's eyes the marks by which they could be recognised as helpers of the weak, to whom those in need would readily go.

First they were given the general rule by which people decided as to what tree they would go and look for fruit. "There is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit; nor again a corrupt tree that bringeth forth good fruit."

His fitness for helping others would depend, in the first place, upon what the man's nature was. If, like a good tree, his nature were good, the fruit which he brought forth would not fail to be good for the people of God: but if he were like a bad tree, then, however well the fruit might look, its effects would be bad; the bad influence of an evil nature. Like as people needing good fruit would only go to a good tree to seek for it, so for the spiritual help they needed they would only go to a good man.

That was the general rule by which they would decide; but their personal choice would be guided by what they knew the fruit of any particular tree to be. Trees of the same kind vary in the quality of their fruit; and by the fruit which it brings forth each one is tested and known. So it would be with the servants whom Jesus was training. People would know generally that they were for the helping of the weak; but it would not follow that because they knew that a man was a servant of Jesus they would come to him with confidence, sure that they would get the very help they needed. It would depend upon what the man had shown himself to be; and the mark of his fitness would be, not advice and help borrowed from others, but what he gave of himself; for it is by its own fruit that any tree is known.

There is something in the nature of infirmities, however, which makes people timid about venturing to anyone from whom they are not sure of getting a kindly welcome. In the parable which taught them about this, the strength and refreshment which the weakly would need were represented by figs and grapes, the common food and refreshment in that part of the world; and hungry and thirsty, they are pictured in their weakness as seeking those fruits. No one, those hearers of Jesus were told, would look for figs from thorns; nor would they seek grapes from the prickly bramble-bush: neither would people seek comfort, strength, and refreshment from the touchy, the cross-grained, the unkind.

To sum it all up: like as the people were able to judge of fruit trees by looking at them, so were they to be able to judge of those servants of Christ by what they saw of them. Their lives and natures had to be such that all could plainly see that they were men who could help the weak; plainly see what kind of help each one could give, and that the feelings of none who came to them would be hurt. Or, applying the symbolism used in their former training, for them to be sources of strength and refreshment, of help and comfort to the weak and the failing, they had to be like sons of the bridechamber who have the bridegroom with them: men devoted to Christ and His service; knowing Him: loving Him; ever abiding with Him and in Him; one with Him; showing forth His nature.

With regard to the second mark of fitness, they were made to view themselves from within, and to see what they would have to be if those who came to them seeking help were not to come in vain. Like sons of the bridechamber when the bridegroom was absent, they would have to draw from their own resources. "The good man," they were told, "out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

The "son of exhortation," who by his exhortations helped the people of Antioch, was, we are told, a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and we may take it that the kind of good man referred to in this clause is one who abounds in gifts of the Holy Ghost; especially those of counsel and ghostly strength, the gifts so essential for helping those with infirmities.

The "heart," from whose treasure he draws, was the part regarded as the well-spring of all that a person did and said. The hearts of those fitted for this work will be stored with gathered knowledge and experience of the goodness of God, of His help in the time of trouble, of the means of

grace, of victory and of triumph, from which to draw for the weakly who come seeking advice, example, help to serve God in holiness and righteousness; and from them will come words helpful and good: whereas from a bad heart, the dwelling place of the spirit of the world, the treasure-house of bad thoughts and feelings, of worldly wisdom and ungodliness, nothing but harm can come, bad influence, wrong advice; and such a person is clearly unfit for this work of helping others.

It would be more particularly to this mark of fitness that the principle of fasting would apply: so much would there be that was worldly for them to abstain from, so much that would keep the treasure-house of their hearts from being filled with that which was good.

The rest of their instruction was made up of directions about doing the work; the key, as already mentioned, being prayer.

Great multitudes no longer throng around Jesus as they did on the day when they sought to touch Him and be healed of their infirmities; but the healing power still comes from Him: and although by mortal eye He is unseen, His messengers still have to bring the weak to Him to receive that power and be healed. The way in which they bring them is by prayer; and that is why the direction, now given for their guidance when acting for Him, is about prayer. But there was more for them to do than to come to Him as the Head of the household of God and cry "O Lord! O Lord!" They had not only to pray to Him, but also to do what He told them; sure that, whatever the need might be, by that prayer it had been supplied, and that now they were able to help the weak. But whatever the answer might be, it had to be carried out in Jesus' way. In His way alone the weakness could be healed: by His power alone the weak could stand.

This work of removing weaknesses was likened to the building of a house. The right way and the only way for

them to build was to come to the Lord, come in prayer, hear His word, and do it. Those who did that would build so strongly, and would take away the weakness so completely, that no matter how the flood of temptation and trial might surge against him who was once so weak and frail, so ready to fall, he would stand firm; for out of weakness he had become strong.

What would make a servant of Christ hear his Lord's words and do them not we are not told: no mention being made of his coming to Jesus, he might be one who trusted in himself, and thought that his own way was best, and that old time ways were not suited to the changed conditions of the age; and his building upon the earth without a foundation would show that he was one who was content with outward reformation, with using earthly means to patch the person up so that he became respectable: but in any case his work amongst those beset with weaknesses would, in the end, be a failure. The house which he would build might look well enough, and the reformation of the weak one might seem complete; but the onrush of the old temptation would find the person helpless to resist. All the painfully built up life would collapse, and the man would fall worse than before, a pity and a shame to all; for the ruin of that house would be great. It had been built upon the earth without a foundation.

c. 1.

CHRIST

vii. 1-10. The healing of the centurion's slave.

All through the foregoing rules the same scene had been kept before Theophilus: Jesus, as the Founder of the Church, standing with the twelve and the rest of His pupils, and teaching them how to work for Him amongst people such as those who were around them listening. Owing to the things about which the enquiry was being made, the

foremost place in the account was naturally given to Jesus and the men whom He was training; but it was for the well-being of the listening people, and those whom they represented, that everything was really being done: a fact to which the attention of Theophilus was now drawn by his being told that it was in their hearing that Jesus ended all these sayings.

It was still as the Head of the kingdom of God, providing for the well-being of His people, that He was shown entering into Capernaum. Capernaum was the place used by the evangelist when showing Theophilus how Jesus taught about Himself and His mission as the Christ, and how He made the people marvel at the authority and power of His word by healing the afflicted man; and now, entering into it once more. He was continuing the revelation of Himself which He had then begun. The case chosen has to do with the last section, that about the healing of infirmities; and deals with the part where He spoke of their calling Him "Lord, Lord," showing how He wanted them to approach Him in their pleadings.

A centurion, who had heard the good tidings about Jesus, had a slave who was sick and at the point of death; and because the slave was dear to him, he sought to save him from death and restore him to health and strength by getting Jesus to heal him. He did not go himself to Jesus, but sent two deputations instead; and it was by means of those deputations that the lesson was given.

First came elders of the Jews. Like the Pharisees, they stood for what elders of the Church were not to be. They treated Jesus as if He owed allegiance to the people, and that because the centurion loved them and had helped their worship, He should give way to him with a view to future favours. As reasons for Jesus' doing what he asked, they urged his worthiness and good works: but it was evidently for the slave's sake, and not because of the centurion's good-

ness, or their urging, that Jesus answered his prayer by going with them.

When they drew near to the house a second deputation met Him, made up this time of friends of the centurion, and therefore able to speak personally for him; and it was through them that the pupils of Jesus learned the right way to approach Him in behalf of those whose healing they sought.

Not only did that Roman officer, through his friends, greet a despised Jew as Lord, but he publicly placed himself so low in comparison with Him as to declare himself unfit for Jesus to come under his roof. Moreover, it was not because he was an officer in the Roman army that he had sent others instead of going himself to ask Jesus to come; but because he knew that he was not worthy to approach Him. And, most marvellous of all, they heard him place the power of the word of Jesus far above that of mortal man: "Say the word and my servant shall be healed."

The centurion had reasoned thus: having been commissioned by the emperor, his word to the soldiers under him was law; and because a man was his slave, his authority over him was so boundless that he had but to say, "Do this," and he did it: so, in like manner, Jesus having been commissioned by God as the Christ, His word to those under Him would be law; and so boundless was His authority over the forces of nature that He had but to say the word, as if to a slave, and that which now had power over the sick man, and was destroying him, would cease to act, and he would be saved.

That was the view of Himself as the Christ about which Jesus spoke when He turned to the multitude following Him, and said, "I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel"; and it was faith like that in His authority that His servants had to have in order to approach Him aright, and get the needs of their people supplied.

As for the slave, the occasion of the lesson, a brief note



informed Theophilus that when those who were sent returned to the house, they found him whole; for with the unlimited authority was also unlimited power.

c. 2.

THE LORD

vii. 11-17. The raising of the widow's son.

The second illustration is introduced by the note "And it came to pass afterwards." The word translated "afterwards" is akin to that which the evangelist used when speaking of the order in which the treatise was to be written; and the note showed Theophilus that what he was about to be told was a continuation of the lesson furnished by the centurion, and, like it, had to do with Jesus as the Founder and Ruler of the kingdom of God.

There was again set before him a picture of the kingdom of God on earth as far as it had then been formed—Jesus at the head, as Leader and Lord; and, journeying with Him, the pupils whom He was training; and a great multitude of people. Those pupils were still learning about the authority and power of Him to Whom they would have to come crying, "Lord, Lord," when seeking healing for the infirmities of their people. In the healing of the sick slave they had been shown the faith in His God-given authority with which they were to approach Him, but not the faith in His unlimited power. That lesson had stopped at the gate of death. What when that gate was passed and they had to seek release from the bonds of hopeless grief for those who mourned their dead? So another case was given to show that they were taught to come to Jesus as to One Who is able to deliver from any bondage whatever, even from death itself.

Leading His followers, Jesus went to a city called Nain, that is, "the pleasant," a picture of earthly peace and happiness. Into it death had entered; that unceasing enemy of man's peace and happiness on earth. "As He drew near to

the gate of the city, behold, there was carried out one that was dead, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." Bereft of her husband and her only son, her home life was utterly destroyed. Death had plainly gained the mastery there. With her were very many people of the city, for they had come in numbers befitting so sad a case; but large as the gathering was, and willing to comfort and help, they could neither drive death away, nor fill the void in the widow's heart. They merely helped to swell the triumph march of death.

"When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her." "The lord" was the title by which the master of a household was known. Over all in that household he ruled supreme. With him it lay to say what should be done, and who should do it. To his will the servants bowed; and he assigned to them offices and duties as he saw fit. Whenever this evangelist speaks of Jesus as "the Lord," it means that he is telling Theophilus about something which Jesus said or did as Head of the household of God now called the Church; as the Master dealing with His servants. It was as Head of that household that He dealt with the calamity that had happened, and showed His servants what they were to teach His people about His power over death.

He said to the widow, "Weep not." Only two words: but it was as the Lord that He spoke; and those two words were enough to show Theophilus that, in the household of Christ, there is a message of comfort for mourners, a power to relax the strangling hold of grief, and dry their tears. What he had been taught about this was upheld by the brief account that follows.

"He came nigh and touched the bier; and the bearers stood still." That same power, which had gone forth to heal all who touched Him, at once made itself felt: for, at His touch, the triumphant march of death was stayed, and the spoiler stopped in the act of carrying off his prey.

Then came the token of victory. "Young man, I say unto

thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up." To those pupils of Christ, learning what to tell people about their Lord, it was an assurance of His final conquest of their great enemy, death; an assurance of the time when, at His word, death would give up all its prey, and all would live again, forever free.

The rest of what the evangelist told Theophilus about it, assured him of the things he had been taught about the resurrection, so that he might be able to ease to the uttermost the mourner's pain.

First he told him that the dead, when raised, began to talk. Mourners were not merely to be told that they would see their dead again. They were to be told as well that they would also hear the voice, which had ceased on earth, speak once more the longed-for words of love.

Then he told him that the Lord gave the lad to his mother. It was a symbolic act to show His pupils what they were to teach as taking place when that last enemy, death, was destroyed: how the void in the mourner's hearts would at last be fully filled, and the family circle restored, never to break again.

Fear fell upon all as they stood there in the presence of the Conqueror of death; and they glorified God. Some, remembering perhaps what they had read about the prophets of old, declared that a great prophet had risen up amongst them; whilst others, recalling the prophecy, "Your God will come and save you," held that what was done showed that, in the words of Zacharias, God had visited His people.

The closing note, about the spread of that report through Judæa and the region round about, was to prepare for the next chapter.

## CHAPTER E.

ST. LUKE VII. 18-50.

*a.* vii. 18. *b.* 19-35. *c.* 36-50.

(*a.*).

18. And the disciples of John told him of all these things.

(*b.*) 1.

19-23. And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to the Lord, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?

And when the men were come unto him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?

In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and on many that were blind he bestowed sight.

And he answered and said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them.

And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me.

2.

24-28. And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken with the wind?

But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

This is of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there is none greater than John: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

## 3.

29-35. And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him.

Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like unto children that sit in the market place, and call one to another; which say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not weep.

For John the Baptist is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

And wisdom is justified of all her children.

## c.

36-50. And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

And behold, a woman which was in the city, a sinner: and when she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, and standing behind at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were the Prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth him, that she is a sinner.

And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Teacher, say on. A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. When they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most? Simon answered and

said, He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that even forgiveth sins? And he saith unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

## CHAPTER E. VII. 18-50.

### WHAT JESUS BEGAN TO TEACH

(a). vii. 18. (b). 19-35. (c). 36-50.

a.

vii. 18. *Introduction.* The list of the things which Jesus began to do and to teach is drawing to a close; and with it, the first stage of the certainty that Theophilus was seeking. He had been told about the Christ-work which Jesus claimed as His own, and how He had begun to prepare servants to carry it on for Him, some for preaching good tidings to the poor, and others for proclaiming release to the captives and the recovering of sight to the blind, and setting the bruised at liberty; but as yet he had been told nothing about any for proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. All of those things belonged indeed to that acceptable year, corresponding to what may be called the routine work of the year of jubilee; but like as that work could only be done when the year of jubilee had been proclaimed, so the doing of those things depended upon the proclamation of the acceptable year, and could not be begun until authority was given by the Proclaimer. For the giving of this authority for Him Jesus, in accordance with the plan of God, began to prepare another class of servants. The type on which they were modelled was still John the Baptist, but in another character; that which had brought him to prison. It was for acting as if he were an ambassador of Him Who was to come, and rebuking the ruler of the land, that he had been shut up in prison; and it is in that char-

acter of ambassador that he is being used as the type of this last class of servants in the kingdom of God.

To him in his prison his pupils had come—men whom he had taught about the One, so far above himself, Who would come and sweep away all the evil and worthless from the people of God, and gather the chosen ones into His keeping,—and they had given him a report of all the things about which the evangelist had just told Theophilus. They told him about the healing of the centurion's slave, and the two deputations that had come to Jesus; and about the raising of the widow's son, and the people's verdict thereon: and those two things, and the picture of John with his followers bringing him the report concerning Jesus, serve to introduce the topics of the three sections which make up the body of the chapter.

The topics themselves are foreshadowed in the three statements about John with which the evangelist introduced the description of that Bringer of the salvation of God to Whom John was bearing witness.

1. "The people were in expectation." The signs of the times had reminded them that "the Expectation of nations" had come, and they were eagerly looking for Him.

2. "All men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ."

3. John's answer, "I indeed baptize you with water": separating the penitent from the impenitent, and forming them into a body of which he was the head.

*Summary.* The chapter outlines what Jesus began to teach concerning the plan of God which was being fulfilled by His coming as the Christ with John as His forerunner; and about the reception of that plan.

It opens with Jesus making use of John's deputation to teach about Himself as the One Who was to come, the One through Whom everything belonging to the acceptable year of the Lord was to be done: then making use of John, and teaching about the office which such men as he would fill;



that it was greater than that of a prophet, for it was the office of the messenger of God who was to go before the face of His people: and lastly, teaching about the reception of the plan of God by means of those who accepted, or rejected, John's baptism, and by the effect which John's way of coming, and His own, had upon different kinds of people.

An illustration of the working of the plan of God closes the chapter.

b. 1.

HE THAT COMETH

*Introduction.* iii. 15. And as the people were in expectation.

vii. 19-23. John's deputation to the Lord.

The evangelist began to assure Theophilus of what he had been taught about this third class of servants in the kingdom of God by showing him Jesus making Himself known in the character in which, according to the plan of God, they were specially to serve Him. It was as the Head of the Church of God that Theophilus was being shown Him: a fact which the evangelist pointed out by saying that it was to "the Lord" that John sent his two pupils. To Him, as the Head, belonged that third part of the Christ-work, the proclaiming of the acceptable year, the bringing in of that salvation which all flesh was to see.

Those two pupils of John were acting as his representatives, and all that they said and were told is treated as if it were John himself who was speaking to Jesus and being answered. When one so sparing of words as this evangelist is, not only tells Theophilus in the second of the opening clauses that those whom John sent to Jesus came to Him, but also repeats his question, it shows that in those two clauses two things very closely related were being referred to; and that both were what those whom John was representing had to know about Jesus. What those things were

is found in the account of the healing of the centurion's slave which leads up to this section.

In that account two deputations were shown coming to Jesus. The first, made up of elders of the Jews, regarded Him as a useful man for the people of God, but not as their Head; and it was to get light upon that headship that John, in the gloom of his dungeon, asked the question, "Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another?"

The second deputation, made up of friends of the centurion, and speaking personally for him, declared it to be beneath the dignity of Jesus for Him to come into his house to save his slave; and right views about that had also to be held by those who filled the position in the kingdom of God represented by John at the close of his career. The lack of this knowledge, however, was not a failing of John's; as the evangelist pointed out by no longer speaking of the messengers as his pupils. Seeing that the centurion was a Gentile, those messengers would not only have agreed with his friends, but would also have held that it was only for children of Abraham that the Christ ought to care.

Then the evangelist gave a brief sketch of the character in which Jesus showed that He was to be served. "He healed many of diseases, and scourges, and evil spirits; and on many that were blind He bestowed sight": delivering people from the effects of their sins, the chastisement laid upon them, and the evil which was holding them in bondage, and from the blindness which kept them from seeing their way. It was the Head of the household of God proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord: not to everyone; but only to those whom He judged fit to receive the salvation of God.

The report, which the messengers were to take back to John, is arranged as if for an overseer in the kingdom of God, who was examining the work of the two classes of servants beneath him to see if they were doing their duty faithfully, and preparing their people for seeing the salvation

of God, the acceptable year of the Lord. The report is a summary of all the work for which Jesus had begun to prepare servants: only it is arranged backwards. It begins with the last two parts of their work for Him, the two which, in this treatise, are linked together: how that the blind received their sight and became able to see the path of righteousness, and the lame walked, their infirmity having been taken away and strength given them to walk along that path. Then it passes on to the part of their work which was symbolized by the cleansing of lepers; that which had to do with the forgiveness of sins. After that comes the work of the pioneers of the kingdom of God, those of whom Jesus had spoken as fishers of men. Tracing their work also backwards, He began with the deaf hearing, that is, with the conversion of those whom they had got to listen to them and whose hearts they had won; and then went on to that which was so closely joined to it, the passing from death unto life, the new life at Baptism. And last of all came the first part of the work of fishers of men, the preaching of the gospel to the poor, to those who had none of the treasures of the kingdom of God, none of the fruits of righteousness. All of it was work that Jesus was doing as His own, and for which He was preparing servants to carry on for Him; and it was work which would belong only to Him Who was to come, for it was the work which had to do with the acceptable year of the Lord.

The lesson about Himself closed with the words, "Blessed is he who shall find no occasion of stumbling in Me." John had denounced Herod, and had been left, as it seemed, to his fate. No hand had been stretched out to help him. The Horn of salvation in David's house had given no signs at all of any earthly power. And then there was that strange lowness of mind, that lack of all dignity, shown in His readiness to go down to that Gentile's house in answer to his call. Could such a helpless, poor-spirited being be the One Who was to come, Whose envoy John had set

out to be? But the pupils of Christ learned that it was indeed such a meek and lowly One, wielding no temporal power, Whom they were being taught to serve; and that as He was so would His envoys have to be.

b. 2.

A MESSENGER OF GOD

*Introduction.* iii. 15. All men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ.

vii. 24-28. John the Baptist, the envoy of God.

This section was prepared for by the closing scene in the last chapter; where Jesus, in leading the people to Nain, the place of pleasantness, vanquished death at its gate, and drove away the darkness and dread with which ignorance had beset it.

The evangelist has begun it by speaking of the men, who had come from John, as angels, or envoys. Not that they were being used to represent this new class of servants which Jesus was forming. It was by what was said to the multitudes about John, and not about them, that the things which Theophilus had been taught about that class was being upheld. Naming them thus served as a kind of title for the lesson; for the position which they had filled in connection with John corresponded, in a way, with that which this class of servants would fill in connection with Jesus.

What he had been taught about two of the marks which such servants of Christ have to bear was upheld by what Jesus told the multitudes about the two things they did not think of finding in John when they sought him in the wilderness, the place from which the great Messenger of God was expected to come.

They did not go to gaze upon a reed shaken with the wind. Neither fickleness, nor feebleness, had to be found in those who belonged to this class of servants in the household of God. Men who could be swayed by the breath of public opinion were to have no place amongst them. Those

who led God's people had to be bold, resolute, and immovable, as the Baptist was so well known to be.

Neither were they to be of the type found at that time in the courts of earthly kings: men living in luxury, preying upon the kingdom. It was not to see a man clothed in soft raiment that those multitudes had gone into the wilderness. They were looking for one whose fare was simple, and clothing plain; one with nothing to hinder him from going anywhere, and doing anything for his Master: for they were seeking a messenger of God, a servant of the King of kings.

What the multitudes had really been seeking is learned from what they said at the raising of the widow's son. The sight of that victory over death had made them think that at last the one for whom they had been longing had come; and they said, that a great prophet had risen up among them, and also that God had visited His people. It was to those two longings that Jesus referred when, in the next question, He asked, "But what went ye out to see? a prophet?" and answered it by saying, "Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet." They went to see one who would speak for God; one whose work it would be, like that of the prophets of old, to seek out the lost and give them God's message of pity and pardon and love; to teach people His will, and help and encourage them to do it. And Jesus' reply to them was that they were right; that John was indeed a prophet, but that he also filled another office which was higher still. That office had to do with the second of those longings which had found vent at the raising of the widow's son; and John was a messenger of God through whom He was visiting His people. Those whom John was now representing would also be prophets; but their true position would be that of messengers of God through whom He was visiting His people.

The work belonging to this office was that of the angel whom God had promised in Ex. 23:20 to send before His people to guard it in the way, and lead it on to the conquest

of the part of the world which He had assigned to it. Our Lord explained it as being to furnish the way completely. It would be in a spiritual sense, of course, that the words were being used. The land for His people to conquer was the whole world; the way to conquer it, the path that He marked out. For that way to be furnished thoroughly for them, it would have to be provided at every stage with what was needed for their safety, refreshment, and guidance, and for their marching together orderly and unbrokenly in the steps of their Lord and Leader, the Son of David. Those whom John was now representing would be responsible for everything: for all that would be given to the two lower orders to do; and for the clearing away of all doubt and uncertainty, of everything that would mislead or dishearten, that would make people go astray, or fail in zeal, all error and mistaking of God's will, all that would keep them from being one with Christ. Such work John had done as far as was then possible; and such work those whom he was now representing would have to do in all its fulness.

The last thing which the multitudes were told about John showed Theophilus how Jesus taught people to regard this last and highest class of servants in the kingdom of God. There are two births, the natural and the spiritual, and therefore two ways of regarding human beings: either as born of woman into the world, or born of water and the Spirit into the kingdom of God. As regarded those born of women, there had never been one, no matter how high and important his office, who was greater than John the Baptist. Yet of those in the kingdom of God, any one filling even the lower of those two offices for which they had seen Jesus preparing men, was greater than John. Greater still would the Envoys of that kingdom be.

## b. 3.

## THE RECEPTION OF THE PLAN OF GOD.

*Introduction*, iii. 16. John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water.

vii. 29-35. The reception of plan of God.

It was still about what Jesus began to teach that the evangelist was telling Theophilus, so that this section has to do with instruction given to those whom Jesus was training. What He had begun to teach about Himself as the Leader, and about the kind of men who, according to the plan of God, were to act as leaders for Him, Theophilus had already been told; what he now learned about was the reception which that plan would receive.

Briefly put, the plan of God was that the forerunner should come first, bringing the baptism unto the remission of sins, and take the lead until the coming of Jesus as the Leader of all; and that those whom Jesus raised up to act for Him should then carry on that work of leading until released from their duties by Him at His second coming. What the evangelist has done in this section is to give Theophilus an outline of the way in which that plan was received as far as it was then in operation, so as to show him what members of this order were taught to expect for themselves and their leadership: for as the reception of that plan began, so it would go on; and as the forerunner and the Master for Whom he was preparing were treated, so would they be.

In the introduction to the chapter John was depicted as listening to his pupils whilst they told him about the doings of Jesus; and it is with John and Jesus that this section has to do. The position which John is being regarded as filling is the same as that which he was holding when he spoke to "them all"—the whole set of them as a body—and told them about his baptism: the position of a leader who was enrolling people amongst his followers by the bap-

tism which he was giving. It was in obedience to the word of God that he had come proclaiming his baptism; and it was about those who accepted that baptism that the evangelist first spoke when telling Theophilus about the reception of the plan of God.

"All the people that heard, and the publicans, justified God being baptized with the baptism of John." Like those in whose ears all the directions for the lower orders had been uttered, the people here are spoken of as if an organised body made up of those who "heard," who not merely listened to the words of Jesus, but gave heed to them, and were ready to do all that He would want them to do. By this they "justified God"; as also did the outcast publicans, of whose coming to Jesus Theophilus had been told. All of these had been baptized with the baptism of John, and by that baptism had become his followers, taking him for their head and leader. To him, as he was making straight the paths of the Lord, they had come, and had been given rules for the guidance of their lives. Now they justified God; showing by their coming to Jesus as their Leader and Head, how good and right His plan was, both as regarded the path of reformation marked out for them, and the leader provided for them.

The men whom Jesus was training were evidently not being taught that in His kingdom there would only be found those who bowed whole-heartedly to His will and received His envoys as men coming from Him and speaking for Him; for the other case given to Theophilus was that of the Pharisees and lawyers.

In this treatise it is always in connection with the second class of servants which Jesus created that the Pharisees are used. They stand, as already said, for what such servants ought not to be; the fault being usually pointed out by means of those with whom they are associated. This time the evangelist has coupled them with lawyers—men skilled in the law—to show that what was now being con-



demned in those whom they represented would come from the views which they held of the law of God's kingdom, and from the way in which they applied it to suit themselves. In this case it arose from their opinions about the plan of God in sending John, and therefore those of whom he was now being used as the type, to lead His people and provide for them. This plan of having overseers in His kingdom, leaders whom all the rest must follow and obey, the Pharisees rejected as regarded themselves. It was well enough for the common people to be ruled, led, and provided for; but as for themselves, they could see nothing in the law of God which bound them to submit to John, or anyone else like him.

Then came the Lord's own verdict upon men of the Pharisee type who reject the plan of God. "Unto what shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like?" A generation is a race, or breed; and every breed has its own distinctive marks by which its members may be known. The breed of which Jesus was speaking consisted of those who rejected the plan of God unto themselves; and the mark of its members was perverseness, such as that shown by children who would do nothing that they were wanted to do, who would accept no plan that was offered them.

How men of that type would behave to the envoys of Christ was shown by their treatment of the Baptist and of Jesus. John was very strict in his way of living, and when he came on his mission he ate no bread and drank no wine; so they said that he had a devil:—a man utterly unfit to be recognised by servants of God as their leader. The Son of man came doing just the opposite, eating and drinking; and of Him, too, they said evil things, calling Him a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of outcast publicans and of sinners: judging Him also unfit to be recognised by people like themselves, strict-living, saintly, select.

After having thus set before Theophilus the way in

which envoys of Christ were to expect to be treated, the evangelist showed him how they were taught to regard the two classes of people he had mentioned, those who received them as part of the plan of God for His kingdom, and those who rejected them. "Wisdom is justified of all her children." The wisdom of God in providing this class of servants to lead His people is proved right by all its children: both by people like those who heard and the publicans, who were baptized with the baptism of John; and also by those who receive the messengers of God, whether they come as the Baptist had come, or as the Son of man had lived and acted. Those who do not justify wisdom in the way described are not her children; but, like the Pharisees and lawyers who rejected to themselves the plan of God, are children of folly, and are to be treated as such.

## c.

## THE WORKING OF THE PLAN OF GOD.

vii. 36-50. The case of the woman who was a sinner.

It was as the Prophet Who was to come to lead and rule the people of God and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord that Jesus had been speaking and acting, and it was as one who was known to lay claim to that office and had begun to act as the Prophet like unto Moses was to do, that the Pharisee asked Him to eat with him, and thus gave rise to the scene which the evangelist now set before Theophilus. In it he was shown Jesus going into the Pharisee's house, and having to sit down without any of the usual eastern welcome; then a woman coming in, and taking her stand behind Him weeping, her tears falling down on His feet; then the woman stooping, and wiping His feet with her hair, kissing them, and anointing them with the ointment she had brought with her.

The Pharisee, whose house it was, represented, as usual, a faulty member of the second class of servants that Jesus was raising up; one of those who rejected unto themselves

the plan of God. The woman, who appeared on the scene, belonged to the same place, and her reputation would thus be well known to him. She was a sinner, and therefore an outcast; an excommunicate; one upon whom "a scourge" had been laid. Against such a one the door of any Pharisee's house would have been fast closed, even though she had repented, and was justifying God by her changed life. She was evidently one of those who "heard," and knew what Jesus had declared about the penitent; for when she knew that He was there sitting at meat, she had ventured in, and had come to Him with her thank-offering, trusting to Him to receive her. As for the Pharisee, so sure was he that such a person had no place amongst the people of God, that, when he saw what she was doing, he said within himself that if Jesus were indeed the Prophet, He would have known who the woman was, and what manner of person she was; taking it for granted that He would have condemned her at once, and have driven her away from Him, for she was a sinner.

It is with the two things that he said to himself about Jesus and the woman that the two parts of the explanation of the scene have to do.

The Pharisee's thoughts had barely shaped themselves, when the voice of the Guest was heard addressing him by name: "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." His reply was short and flippant: "Teacher, speak." Whatever claims Christ's Envoys might make to be leaders of the people of God, men of this Pharisee type would acknowledge no right of leadership over themselves. Like as Jesus was regarded by Simon the Pharisee, so might they also expect to be regarded: merely as teachers, and with as little respect as their Master was treated.

Unmoved, the Guest spoke on, referring first to Simon's remark about who the woman was,—a sinner. What He said had plainly to do with His great work of proclaiming that acceptable year of the Lord which the year of jubilee pre-

figured, for it was about two debtors, each of whom was unable to return what had been lent him: a far-reaching parable; for to every one treasures of God are entrusted which sin destroys, and makes the person helpless to repay. The only way of release is for the debt to be forgiven; so the parable described the two debtors as being freely forgiven, like as debtors had been, by God's command, in the year of jubilee. A debtor, set free then, was indeed free: none could treat him as being still in debt.

Now the Pharisee was regarding the woman as being still a sinner, still in debt; so Jesus showed him, by an un-failing sign, that he was wrong; that she was one whose sins had already been forgiven, and therefore not to be treated as a sinner. That sign was love; the love which showed itself in her deep sorrow and humility, her gratitude and devotion when she washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head—a woman's glory; when she kissed those travel-stained feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Had the Pharisee also been one with whom God was thus mercifully dealing, he too would have been full of love; a love which would not have been satisfied with merely asking Jesus to eat with him, but would have shown itself in a warm welcome and due reverence. To whom little is forgiven, the same is loving little.

But there was something else for which the woman needed forgiveness besides the breaking of the law against adultery. There was that second thing to which the Pharisee had referred when he spoke about the manner of woman she was. She belonged to the ranks of the excommunicated; those whose presence was so hurtful that they had to be cast out of the fellowship of the people of God: a picture to Theophilus of those who sinned against the Body of Christ, dishonouring it, injuring it, until its unity had to be further marred by their being cut off, and cast away from it. Now her sin against the unity of the people

of God had also been forgiven her,—her love had shown that—but before she could be restored to her place amongst God's people, and received by them, her forgiveness had to be publicly known. That was why Jesus said to her before them all "Thy sins have been forgiven": proclaiming to her and to all that she was no longer to be accounted a sinner and excommunicate, unfit for the company of the people of God.

"Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" the friends and companions of the Pharisee, who were sitting at meat with Jesus, began to say within themselves. It was not to make Theophilus sure that the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins such as those of impurity which the woman had committed, that the evangelist told him this; for he had done that by the account of the forgiveness of the paralysed man, and he does not repeat himself. It was to point out to him that Jesus claimed and exercised the power of pardoning, releasing, and restoring the excommunicated; and that the successors of those men at the table would also carp at the Envoys of Christ when, acting in His name, they claimed and used that power.

Ignoring them altogether, Jesus went on speaking to the woman. "Thy faith hath saved thee": the faith which had brought her into that house, sure that Jesus could, and would, receive her, and would restore her to her place amongst the people of God; faith in the plan of God by which such power was given unto men.

"Go into peace." The scourge of excommunication had been taken away. For her, the acceptable year of the Lord had come. She had seen the salvation of God.

**PART II.**

**THE TEXT**

**ST. LUKE VIII. 1.—XII. 48.**



## CHAPTER F.

ST. LUKE VIII. 1.—IX. 9.

(a). viii. 1-3. (b). viii. 4-56. (c). ix. 1-9.

(a).

viii. 1-3. And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God, and with him the twelve, and certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom seven devils had gone out, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto them of their substance.

(b). 1.

4-18. And when a great multitude came together, and they of every city resorted unto him, he spake by a parable: The sower went forth to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden under foot, and the birds of the heaven devoured it. And other fell on the rock; and as soon as it grew, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other fell amidst the thorns; and the thorns grew with it, and choked it. And other fell into the good ground, and grew, and brought forth fruit a hundredfold. As he said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And those by the wayside are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved. And those on the rock are they which, when they have heard, receive the word



with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience.

And no man, when he hath lighted a lamp, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but putteth it on a stand, that they which enter in may see the light. For nothing is hid, that shall not be made manifest; nor anything secret, that shall not be known and come to light.

Take heed, therefore, how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he thinketh he hath.

## 2.

19-21. And there came to him his mother and brethren, and they could not come at him for the crowd. And it was told him, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. But he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

## 3.

22-25. Now it came to pass on one of those days, that he entered into a boat, himself and his disciples; and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake.

And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. And he awoke, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And being afraid they marvelled, saying one to another, Who then is this, that he commandeth even the winds and the water, and they obey him?

## 4.

26-40. And they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is over against Galilee. And when he was come forth upon the land, there met him a certain man out of the city, who had devils; and for a long time he had worn no clothes, and abode not in any house, but in the tombs. And when he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I beseech thee, torment me not. For he commanded the unclean spirit to come out from the man. For oftentimes it had seized him: and he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters; and breaking the bands asunder, he was driven of the devil into the deserts. And Jesus asked him, What is thy name? And he said, Legion; for many devils were entered into him.

And they intreated him that he would not command them to depart into the abyss. Now there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they intreated him that he would give them leave to enter into them. And he gave them leave. And the devils came out from the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd rushed down the steep into the lake, and were choked.

And when they that fed them saw what had come to pass, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what had come to pass; and they came to Jesus, and found the man, from whom the devils were gone out, sitting, clothed, and in his right mind, at the feet of Jesus: and they were afraid. And they that saw it told them how he that was possessed with devils was made whole. And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes round about asked him to depart from them; for they were holden with great fear: and he entered into a boat, and returned.

But the man from whom the devils were gone out prayed him that he might be with him: but he sent him away, saying, Return to thy house, and declare how great things God hath done for thee. And he went his way, publishing throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done for him. And when Jesus returned, the multitude welcomed him; for they were all waiting for him.

## 5.

41-56. And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him to come into his house; for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the multitudes thronged him.

And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, and could not be healed of any, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately the issue of her blood stanchd. And Jesus said, Who is it that touched me? And when all denied, Peter said, and they that were with him, Master, the multitudes press thee and crush thee. But Jesus said, Some one did touch me: for I perceived that power had gone forth from me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people for what cause she touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Teacher. But Jesus hearing it, answered him, Fear not: only believe, and she shall be made whole. And when he came to the house, he suffered not any man to enter in with him, save Peter, and John, and James, and the father of the maiden and her mother. And all were weeping, and bewailing her: but he said, Weep not; for she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. But he, taking her by the hand, called, saying, Maiden, arise. And her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately: and he commanded that something be given her to eat.

And her parents were amazed: but he charged them to tell no man what had been done.

## (c.). 1.

ix. 1-6. And he called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal.

And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor wallet, nor bread, nor money; neither have two coats. And into whatsoever house ye enter, there abide, and thence depart. And

as many as receive you not, when ye depart from that city, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

And they departed, and went throughout the villages, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.

## 2.

7-9. Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done: and he was much perplexed, because that it was said by some, that John was risen from the dead; and by some, that Elijah had appeared; and by others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. And Herod said, John I beheaded: but who is this, about whom I hear such things? And he sought to see him.



## **PART II.**

**VIII. 1.—XII. 48.**

### **NOTES**

**WHAT JESUS DID.**



## CHAPTER F. VIII. 1.—IX. 9.

### HELPERS

a. viii. 1-3. b. 4-56. c. ix. 1-9.

#### a.

viii. 1-3. *Introduction.* The list of statements which forms the introduction to this chapter begins with a short note usually given as, "It came to pass afterwards," or "soon afterwards." The word translated "afterwards" is the same as that which the evangelist used in the introduction to the first chapter when telling Theophilus that the contents of the treatise were set forth "in order"; so that the note really is, "And it came to pass in the order." The order in which the beginnings of what Jesus did and taught had been set before Theophilus is as follows: first of all he was told about the beginnings of two classes of servants, one to help Jesus as fishers of men, and the other to act as His messengers; then he was given brief extracts from the things which Jesus began to teach about the life and duties of those two classes of servants; and lastly he was told how Jesus began to teach about Himself as Christ the King, and about a class of messengers that would serve Him thus. The note therefore meant that the completions of those doings and teachings would be given him in the same order, and that the account would start with the formation of the first of the two classes whose beginning had been touched upon in Chapter C, the chapter upon what Jesus began to do.

In doing this the evangelist has taken the five sections



of that chapter in their order, one by one, and has devoted a whole chapter to each of them. These new chapters he has built up by subdividing each of those sections, and making its five subdivisions the starting points of the five parts of its corresponding chapter. As a rule the length of each part of a chapter depends upon the degree of development of the subject in the subdivision which belongs to it.

The chapter opens with Jesus going about through cities and villages proclaiming, and bringing good tidings of the kingdom of God; accompanied by the twelve pupils whom He was training to help Him in that work. As they went about with Him they watched and listened; learning from the things He did and said, and from the explanations He afterwards gave them, how they were to do the work. It is only an outline of the training they received before their Ordination that is given here, but it was evidently thought to be enough to assure Theophilus of the instruction which he had received about it.

The women, spoken of in the introduction as being with Jesus and ministering unto them of their substance, do not appear again until the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord are being dealt with; when they are referred to as "the women that followed Him from Galilee," and "the women of our company." They all bore the same mark; that which showed itself in Simon's wife's mother, the first recorded member of the order. She, it will be remembered, was holden with a great fever, and as soon as ever Jesus had set her free, she arose and ministered unto them. And every one of those women had, in one way or another, been in affliction and had been delivered by Jesus. Each had learned from her own experience His power and love, and had devoted herself to Him and to the spread of His kingdom. It was a work of love. Grateful to the Saviour for His great goodness, they were doing all in their power to help Him and His followers in their work of mercy for others who were also in need. They are shown here as a distinct part of

the service of the kingdom of God; a definite body, separate, like the twelve, from the rest of mankind, and allied to Jesus. They had sacrificed their possessions, and devoted them to Jesus and to those with Him; and, as we can see from their travelling about with the Lord and His chosen band, they too had forsaken home and friends and were following Him.

In only one part of the chapter are they made use of at all, and that but just enough to warrant the evangelist in mentioning them in the introduction. By thus putting the order of Deaconesses in evidence, he was able, without spoiling the clearness of the treatise at all, to fill in this part of the organization of the Church, and show Theophilus that what he had been taught about it rested upon the authority of Jesus. Anything further that he might wish to know about the order, or about anything for which they were used as references, he could get from those whose names were given him—Mary Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna.

As for the Helpers, the evangelist satisfied Theophilus about them by showing him the sure foundation upon which everything connected with them stood. That foundation was Jesus Christ. Every part of the instruction which he had received about the order was established by tracing it back to Him. The order existed because it was founded by Jesus; its position in the Church was recognized because that position had been given it by Jesus; the preparation which its workers had to undergo was based upon the preparation which Jesus gave; and the Ordination which they received found its sanction in the Ordination which Jesus Himself had instituted. For even those whom Jesus trained could not act until they had been personally called to Him, and sent by Him. The power they needed came from Him; He was the source of the authority which they were to exercise. From Him their commission came. He was the Fountain Head.

It was as the Christ, doing the work for which He had been anointed, that the twelve were learning to help Him; so that when they went forth by themselves to carry on that work for Him, it was as men acting for Jesus Christ that they would have to be regarded.

*Summary.* The training now described goes on from where that given to Peter left off. In a series of living pictures Theophilus was shown what kind of persons men had to be who were to become pioneers of the kingdom of God, and what they needed in order to be able to make its good tidings known.

The multitude listening to something they could not understand, and Jesus explaining it afterwards to a little band of men, gave him the first mark of fitness for becoming a Helper of Jesus; for those men were true "hearers" of the word of God, and had come to Jesus to be taught the full meaning of what He had been saying: whilst from the household of Jesus, which then came on the scene, he learned that to serve in the household of God they had also to be doers of the word.

As for the things required for doing the work, he was assured about them by being shown Jesus giving the twelve a lesson upon gathering people into the kingdom of God. First, in the scene in the boat, he was shown how they were taught to regard Him with Whom they were to work: then, when they had landed, he saw them taught by means of the man who spoke from his own experience, how He wanted the work to be done: and lastly, by the healing of the woman and the raising of the dead child, how Jesus taught them what they were to know, and to make the people know, about what they did when, as fishers of men, they gathered them in for Jesus.

Of the two illustrations which close the chapter, the first has to do with the command, "Let us go over unto the other side," and confirmed what Theophilus had been taught about the sending of men as Helpers of Jesus, and

the faith they required for going; whilst the second served as an example of the perplexity which the doings of Jesus caused.

F. b. 1.

HEARERS

*Beginning.* v. 1-3. Now it came to pass, while the multitude pressed upon Him and heard the word of God, that He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; and He saw two boats standing by the lake: but the fisherman were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And He entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitude out of the boat.

*Continuation.* viii. 4-18. The parable of the sower.

Simon, taking Jesus out to a spot from whence He could teach the people, was the example given of the way in which the first mark of fitness for becoming a Helper of Jesus would begin to show itself; showing that the entrance to their preliminary training was readiness to help the Preacher. The entrance to their further training was readiness to learn about His teaching.

Theophilus was shown Jesus with the twelve whom He was training; and there, gathered together before Him, a great multitude of people: a picture of the work to be done, and the workmen being trained to do it. That crowd was made up of all sorts and conditions of men drawn from every city, and therefore differing in powers of mind, experience, and knowledge; and Jesus wanted everyone of them to hear and understand His teaching. He was telling them one of those wondrous stories, so simple, and yet so hard fully to understand; and when He finished He cried, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." Whereupon those whom He was training asked Him about the parable; and it was from what they were told that Theophilus learned the rest of this first mark of fitness for ministering

to Jesus in the word, and teaching the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

"Mysteries" were secret things of a religious society made known only to the initiated. In the kingdom of God it was given to the twelve, and those whom they were representing, to know the mysteries themselves; but to the rest it was only given to know them in the way in which they have come down to us in the Gospels, in parables; that is, comparisons, or illustrations. These comparisons of the mysteries were sometimes set forth in words, sometimes in deeds; and are to be found in the short stories which Jesus told the people, or else in the miracles and signs which He did before them. The former were parables in words; the latter, parables in deeds. Those in words, to which the name of parable is usually confined, were what the people heard and did not understand; the parables in deeds were those they saw and did not perceive. Helpers of Jesus had to be able to make them clear to all. People who saw and could not perceive were to have the mysteries shown them so plainly that they could not fail to see them; those who heard and could not understand were to have them explained so clearly that they could not fail to grasp their meaning. This could only be done by men who knew and understood those mysteries; and it was about the kind of men who could gain that knowledge that they were taught by the interpretation which Jesus gave them of the parable of the sower.

The parable, being about the different ways of hearing the word of God, applied to what He was revealing about the mysteries of His kingdom through Jesus; and although spoken to the people generally, had to be taken to themselves personally by the twelve if they would become fit to help Jesus in His work of making the good tidings of the kingdom known.

All the cases set before them were those of men who had ears to hear, for every one of them heard the word of

God; but being able to do that did not of itself show that they were fit to tell people about the mysteries of His kingdom. Everything depended upon the kind of hearers they were. Jesus began with "those by the wayside"; casual hearers, men who heard, but did not care for what they heard. They were not God-fearing men; they did not reverence His word; and their case was hopeless from the first. From hearts like theirs the devil takes the word away, lest they should believe and be saved. That is the end of them for this service of Christ: for the key to the knowledge of the mysteries is belief in the word of God, and the first mystery to be learned is that of salvation; and that is not found by those who do not treasure the word in their hearts. No matter how much they may know about the word of God, unless they believe in it they are worthless for making the mysteries of His kingdom known. Men of that type were passed over completely, and at once.

So too were "those on the rock," those whose faith in the word of God was weak. Far above the former failures, they received the word with joy, the word which told of salvation; and for a while they believed. But there was no depth to their faith. The mysteries never became realities to them. When a time of persecution comes to men of that type, a time when their faith in the word of God is put to the proof, doubts cast upon its truth and upon the truth of the mysteries of the kingdom are too much for their feeble faith, and they fall away. Such men also were cast aside as unfit to become Helpers of Jesus, ministers of the word.

At this stage a change was made in the interpretation of the parable. The first place was no longer given to those who heard, but to the seed itself; their fitness for the work being shown by the fruit which the seed, which is the word of God, brought forth in them. First came that which fell among thorns. These men received the word, and were about to bear fruit, when a blight came over them as they went on their way, and they failed. They were not wholly

given to the things of God, and as preachers for Jesus Christ they would have been failures. The cares of this life, its wealth, its pleasures, are fatal to growth in the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, to seeking, finding, knowing them as a preacher of the gospel should. They stifle spiritual life. When worldliness had crept in, those who should have become Helpers of Jesus, had nothing to show others of the hidden things of God. Their growing knowledge was stifled. They had no thoughts and learnings of their own to give, and were useless for turning people to God.

At last the twelve were shown those who could learn to be Helpers of Jesus and carry on the work of preaching the good tidings to the poor for which He had been anointed. In them the three causes of failure were replaced by the three qualifications which He required. Instead of being like the thorny land, their heart was "honest"; instead of shallow soil like that upon the rock, it was good; instead of letting the seed lie by the wayside and be carried off, they held it fast. In other words, instead of having a heart tainted by worldliness, those who come to a knowledge of the mysteries have an "honest," that is, a morally beautiful heart, the beauty of a life given up to the word of God: their heart, too, is "good"; not fickle, weakly, or easily depressed, but firm, steadfast, staunch: and they treasure the word of God.

Such was their nature compared with those who were tried and found wanting. Moreover they had patience. "Bearing fruit" is a work of patience. And such men have to work. To gain the knowledge of the word of God which is required for teaching it clearly and truly; to understand the parables in words and the parables in deeds so as to be able to unfold them to their fullest depths; to know the mysteries of the kingdom so well that they can make them plain to all, calls not only for meditation and a constant dwelling in the midst of sacred things, but for study hard

and long; the patient onward working of men of prayer, who are content with nothing short of the highest possible stage of perfection; with nothing less than bearing fruit a hundred fold.

Another parable showed them why Jesus was teaching them, and for what purpose this fruit of the knowledge of the word of God was being given them. It was for the good of others. They could not help being blessed themselves by what they learned, but as servants of Christ it was for the sake of His people that it was given to them to know the mysteries of His kingdom. He wanted them to act as His lamps, showing forth the knowledge which they gained. Lamps are lit, not for their own enlightening, but to give light to those who enter the house. Keeping the knowledge of the mysteries to themselves would be like shutting up a lamp in a vessel; revealing them only to a limited number, like a lamp under a bedstead lighting only the floor. The knowledge was for every one; for all who wanted to learn. Also the full light was to be given. There were to be no hidden things in the kingdom of God; no limit to the knowledge gained, or the teaching given. In due time the whole of the mysteries would be made known; or, as it is put, every hidden thing will become open to sight, everything hard to understand will be known and become plain.

But their lesson was not over yet. It was in answer to His cry, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," that they had asked about the parable; and the answer was all about hearers. They had to be hearers of the word of God if they would become fit to preach the good tidings of the kingdom to others; and a Helper of Jesus would stand or fall according to the way in which he heard the word of God. "Take heed therefore how ye hear." If, like the seed in the good ground, he lays hold of the word which he receives, he will grow in the knowledge of the mysteries; but if, like those by the wayside, he is without a living faith in God's word, his hold upon it will be so slack that he will lose all



the knowledge of them which had come to him, and which he thought he had made his own.

b. 2.

DOERS

*Beginning.* v. 4, 5. And when He had left speaking He said unto Simon, Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answered and said, Master, we toiled all night and took nothing: but at Thy word I will let down the nets.

*Continuation.* viii. 19-21. The household of Jesus.

The crowd around Jesus may not have been the same as in the last section, but, from the way in which it is mentioned, the state of things was evidently supposed to be the same as that with which the former scene had closed. Jesus was there with His little band of pupils, whilst all around was the multitude waiting to be told about the kingdom of God. He laboured alone; for as yet there were none to help Him to carry on the work for which He had been anointed, and preach good tidings to the poor. Those pupils of His, whose career Theophilus was following, had learned about being hearers of the word of God; but Jesus required something more than that from men whom He made His Helpers. What it was, the twelve were taught by means of another little band which appeared on the scene, standing outside the crowd.

They were the mother and brethren of Jesus. The brethren of Jesus were also sons of David, owning "The son of David" as their head; so that that little band was the household of which, as the genealogical table had shown, Jesus was the Head in Joseph's place. Over them, as Head of the house, He had all the authority which, according to eastern custom and Jewish training, belonged to that position. To Him they looked up. To Him they owed allegiance. In all things pertaining to the household His word was law. The men whom Jesus was training to be His Help-

ers, were to be the beginning of His new household. All who entered that new household had to give the same willing service that was due to Him in the old; service such as He had expected of Simon when He told him to put out into the deep, and let down the nets for a draught.

More than that, however, was required of those who belonged to the new household of Jesus; but before telling Theophilus about it the evangelist drew his attention to some points of difference between the two households. First, the mother and brethren of Jesus were kept from Him by the crowd; whereas with His new household that same crowd was the cause of their being there with Him at all, and was drawing them closer to Him. Also those who belonged to the household which was outside the crowd were desiring in vain to see Him; whilst the members of the household within the crowd had Jesus with them.

Having pointed out these things to him, the evangelist went on to give him the great mark of the household of Jesus. It was the kind of life its members led, and by that life the second test of fitness was made. The lives of those who were to become Helpers of Jesus had to be such as were worthy of members of His household; for through them outsiders would judge about their Head, and the kingdom of God which He preached. The tone of their lives had to be the tone of the household of which Jesus is the Head; their words, their deeds, their very thoughts and feelings had to be in keeping with that household, pure, holy, loving, and true; for the ways of that household are the ways of those who walk by the word of God.

Those who are chosen to preach the gospel must of necessity be hearers of the word of God, and have a deep knowledge of it; but a still greater qualification, and one which all can see and judge is that they are doers of the word.

It was because he was going to use this scene for showing Theophilus the qualification that Jesus required of His

servants, that the evangelist was able to bring the Deaconesses into the introduction of the chapter. The household of Jesus, as it appeared in the scene, was made up of two parts; His mother, and His brethren. It was by means of the "brothers" of Jesus that Theophilus was taught about those who were to become Helpers. The mother, whose love had shown itself so devotedly in ministering to her Son, represented the band of faithful women who ministered to Him; and it was by means of her that Theophilus was taught about their requirements. As members of His household, their mark of fitness also was that they were doers of the word of God.

b. 3.

UNDER CHRIST

*Beginning.* v. 6-10. And when they had this done they inclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their nets were breaking; and they beckoned unto their partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was amazed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken; and so were also James and John, sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon.

*Continuation.* viii. 22-25. The storm on the lake.

Having shown Theophilus the marks of fitness which Jesus required of those who would become His Helpers, the evangelist passed on to the things which they needed for doing the work. It was "in those days," he told him, that what he was about to relate took place; the days spoken of in the introduction, when the twelve were with Jesus as He went about proclaiming the kingdom of God and telling its good tidings; so that what follows is about

Jesus as the Preacher of the gospel to the poor, training His pupils in things which He held to be essential for helping Him in that work.

It was then as the Christ, the Preacher of the gospel to the poor, setting out on one of His missionary journeys, that Theophilus was shown Him entering into a boat, and the men, whom He was training to serve Him, entering it with Him. They were there as His crew; ready and willing to take Him wheresoever He wanted to go, and to whomsoever He wanted to go. But there was this difference between the relationship of Jesus to His Helpers and that of a captain to his crew. Jesus treated them as being in close partnership with Himself. Instead of an order to set forth, it was "Let us go over unto the other side of the lake." They were His ministers; but He was with them as their Partner, their Fellow-helper.

In that other scene in a boat they had been taught about Him as the Saviour of men; how perfect His wisdom and knowledge; how great the success of those who worked under Him as fishers of men. Now they learned that nothing could stop Him; and that those who helped Him would have with them One Who could not fail. In the former lesson they had been taught to know Him as the Saviour mighty to gather in and save; in this they were taught to know Him as their Lord, the Christ anointed with the power of God.

The lesson began with their being left, as it were, to themselves. He fell asleep, and seemed to have given up, not only all share in the work, but all interest in it as well. Then a storm swept down upon them, and the boat began to fill. Finding their own strength and skill unavailing, they awoke Him with the cry, "Master, Master, we are perishing."

The title which they gave Him was the same which Simon had used on the former occasion, when he recognized

Jesus as being in command of the boat, but had not yet learned how great a share He was taking in the work. They came to Him indeed as the master, that is, the one in charge who says what is to be done; but they came as to one like themselves, and therefore, like themselves, in danger. But what Theophilus had been taught about Jesus and His service required for its upholding the fact that the Master is unconquerable; and that, in spite of all the storms that may beat upon them, in spite of the difficulties, dangers, and temptations besetting them, His servants are in perfect safety when with Him, and trusting to Him. So the evangelist went on to tell him of the almighty power of Jesus; how the tempest ceased at His rebuke, and all was still. Though sleeping, He was still the Saviour, ready and able to save.

But to act for Him as preachers of the gospel they had to have faith in Him. Not every kind of faith would do. A fair-weather faith, which collapses in the hour of trial, and leaves the man to meet the risks with a troubled heart, alone and unaided, is of no use for a Helper of Jesus. What is needed is a calm, deep faith in His presence, power, and help; a faith which nothing can break down. But to have that faith aright they have also to have a clear, sure knowledge of Him Whom they serve. In this too the twelve were at that time lacking. Terrified and amazed, they said one to another, "Who then is this, that He commandeth even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?" Ministers of Christ have to know that He is able to shield them from all dangers, able to quell all assaults upon them by powers visible and invisible; to know that He is indeed the Christ, the Son of man anointed by God to preach the gospel to the poor, and do all those things for them of which the good tidings spoke; the Son of God Whose commands the winds and the water obey; Who can say to the wind, "Come from the four winds, and breathe upon these dead, and let them live," and the breath of life enters into them, and they live;

Who can command the water to cleanse them, and they are cleansed.

b. 4.

SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

*Beginning.* v. 10. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

*Continuation.* viii. 26-40. The casting out of the legion.

The great aim of the Helpers, when proclaiming the kingdom of God and preaching its good tidings, may be summed up in the words, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus." To gain their end they have to get people to loathe evil and its bondage, and long for the freedom of the children of God; to forsake the kingdom of darkness and turn with eager hearts to Jesus, ready to welcome Him and the kingdom which He brought. What kind of instruction Theophilus had received about doing this can be learned from the account which was given him of what those with Jesus saw on the other side of the lake.

Like the rest of the chapter, the style of this section is spectacular. The view, which Theophilus was given of the things seen by the twelve, was such as a person would have when looking down upon a stage at a series of living pictures. There was the landing of Jesus; the wild figure meeting Him; the swine rushing down the hill into the lake, and the keepers hurrying into the city; the crowds flocking out to Jesus, and Jesus returning to the boat and departing; then the solitary figure, left on the shore, turning and going into the city; after that Jesus coming back again, and the crowds once more flocking out of the city to meet Him, but this time, gathering around Him rejoicing, and Jesus remaining with them.

It was an object lesson upon conversion, teaching the twelve how to become fishers of men. The people of Gerasa, the city to which the man belonged who met them when

they landed, were those for whose conversion they had come; the man himself being an outcome of the state of that place.

As fishers of men, whose work it would be to win sinners from the error of their ways, they had to know the awful nature of sin; and this they were taught by having it shown them in a form which none could mistake: the gross foulness of a man who was wholly given to evil. It was an extreme case; but the workings of sin are of the same nature in every one, though varying in degree. There was the loss of the sense of modesty; the liking for foul surroundings; the gulf between the sinner and God; the distaste for holiness, and dislike for the presence of Jesus; the clinging to the old, bad life; the powerlessness of all earthly means to curb the influence which evil has upon its victims.

They had also to know, as fishers of men, that evil deeds, like any other deeds, are followed by their due effects; and that the wages of sin is death. Upon a human being its action is often hidden, and its consequences seem delayed; but by the way in which the lesson was given that day, the law which it follows was made very plain. Evil was allowed to work unchecked in creatures that are a by-word for what is sensual, animal; and the end was death, the stifling of the breath of life.

These things Helpers of Jesus must know and proclaim; but the mere telling of them will not win people to Him. There is a way of preaching which ends in driving people from Jesus, and a way which draws people ever closer to Him; and these two ways and their results were the next things seen by those pupils of Jesus.

The first preachers whom they saw were the keepers of the swine, the men whom Theophilus was shown hurrying into the city. The awful account which they gave of the ruin caused by evil aroused the people of the city and brought them to Jesus. They saw Him and saw also the wonderful change He had wrought—the man, but lately

frenzied and terrible, sitting at His feet, clothed and in his right mind: but the sight gave them no joy; it kindled in them no desire to be also with Jesus. The presence of the power which would do such things terrified them. They were afraid of Jesus. "Those who saw" went on with their preaching; the twelve looking on and listening. With the rescued one there before the people's very eyes, they told them all about it: but their words were powerless to convert. The fears of their hearers grew worse and worse, until at last, instead of being turned to Jesus, all the people of the Gerasenes round about besought Him to go away from them; and the boat, which Theophilus was shown leaving the shore, took Him from their sight. The preachers who spoke from what they had merely seen, and worked on the fears of their hearers, had failed. The Gerasenes were left unconverted.

In the last scene, those very same people were all waiting for Jesus, and welcoming Him. What all the speakers who knew so much had failed to do had been done by one man, the man whom the power of the Spirit had changed so marvellously. He had spoken from his own experience, and told his hearers about himself, what great things God had done for him. With living words, the words of one who was speaking of what he himself had undergone, he had made those people understand what kind of man he had been, and what, by the grace of God, he had become. And a wonderful change it was that he was able to tell them about: the change from the tombs to his own home, from madness to a sound mind, from frenzy to peace, from the bondage of devils to sitting at the feet of Jesus.

The man had tasted too what it was to be with Jesus. He had prayed to remain with Him. He had wanted to give up all the earthly things to which Jesus had restored him, so as to be with Him Who had done such great things for him. His heart was with Jesus; and the hearts which he won he drew likewise to Jesus. So thoroughly were the peo-



ple of Gerasa changed, that those who before had besought Jesus to depart from them were now watching for His coming; and when He came back, those who had been afraid of Him received Him gladly. The Gerasenes had repented. The man had caught them for Jesus.

The lesson to the twelve was ended. Heart speaking to heart was to be the way of the Helpers of Jesus. They had to be able to tell others what Jesus had done to themselves. The change which He had made in them might be of any degree, from the transforming of the demoniac to the humbling of Peter; but a known change, made by Jesus, there had to be. To be a fisher of men and win people to repentance, the preacher himself must have experienced true repentance, and still be the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost Who wrought that change of mind; or, to use the illustration given in this treatise, he must be filled with the Holy Ghost from the time he saw the light, as John the Baptist was filled even from his mother's womb.

### b. 5.

#### BELIEVING IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

*Beginning.* v. 11. And when they had brought their boats to land, they left all, and followed Him.

*Continuation.* viii. 41-56. The healing of the woman with the issue of blood, and the raising of Jairus' daughter.

Repentance, or change of mind, had come to the people of Gerasa; but change of mind did not free them from the past. The longing for the kingdom which Jesus was proclaiming was evidently theirs, but longing did not make them members of it. When the Baptist, the Helpers' model, turned many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, he did it, not by preaching repentance only, but the baptism of repentance; and it was by baptism that their return was completed, and they were enrolled amongst those who were awaiting the Christ. In like manner, when the gospel was preached to people who did not belong to the kingdom of

God, what they were urged to do was not simply to repent, but "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus." John's remarkable success in bringing such great multitudes to his baptism must be attributed, not to the mere fact that he kept on telling people to come and be baptized, but to the firm faith which he himself had in the efficacy of that "baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins" which he was proclaiming; and the same strong faith in the efficacy of the Baptism which they were to proclaim had to fill the Helpers of Jesus, if they were to have a like success.

Their training for the work had begun when they followed Jesus like servants waiting upon their master, ready to do whatever He wanted done for the people to whom He had been preaching from the boat. What it was that He had then wanted done had been foreshadowed in the introduction to that chapter by the bringing to Him of those sick of divers diseases for Him to lay His hands on every one of them and heal them. Such people were brought to Jesus, not by force, but by persuasion; by persuading those who had the little ones under their care to bring them to the Saviour Who loved them so well.

That was the beginning of their insight into the nature of the work which, as attendants of Jesus Christ, they would have to do amongst people like the Gerasenes, who had repented, and had had their hearts turned to Him. They too had to be brought to Him one by one for healing and admission into the life in the kingdom of God; and they too had to be persuaded to let themselves be brought. They had to be taught what Baptism would do for them, and made to long for the benefits that it would bring. What servants of Christ needed in order to be able to convince people thus, Theophilus would find in the lesson which Jesus gave to the men whom He was training to carry on His work of preaching the gospel to the poor.

The living picture which contained the lesson begins

with the same crowd of people gathered around Jesus with which the last section closed. Upon the scene came one who was kept before the eyes of Theophilus to the end—the man who came and fell down at Jesus' feet. With him Jesus departed, thronged by the multitudes. Following them was a woman, who made her way through the crowd to Jesus, and touched the hem of His garment. Then there was a pause: the picture showing Theophilus the woman fallen down before Jesus and speaking, whilst all the people looked on and listened. As she lay there, his attention was again drawn to the man by seeing messengers come to him; and then he was shown Jesus, the man, and the multitude all moving on once more to the man's house. The people stopped outside, whilst the man went in with Jesus. Within lay a dead girl. In full view of a little group assembled there, Jesus took her by the hand, and she arose, and lived. The man was astonished—but there the picture abruptly ended. The man's career, which Theophilus had been following, suddenly closed. Jesus had forbidden him to speak; and the expectant crowds were left outside, their instruction unfinished.

But what they had to be taught had been fully set forth in that symbolic picture, and the Helpers' share in it clearly shown. The lesson, as usual, was in the form of a parable, or comparison. In the man seeking healing and life for his child, the twelve, who were being trained to bring people to Jesus, saw themselves represented; whilst the state of the child under his care represented the case of each one whom they brought. The change which took place in that child was the same which each would undergo when enrolled by Baptism in the kingdom of God. It was the unseen, inward change about which Theophilus was being assured; the change which was symbolized by the death of the child, and the life which she received. Entering that life was to her a new birth. Her natural life had ended at her death. Her new life she received, not from her parents, but

from Jesus; by the power which came from Him, the power of the Holy Ghost. By that miracle those Helpers of Jesus were being taught that those baptized in His name were born again at their Baptism; that they then began a new life, which they received by supernatural means, by the special operation of the Holy Ghost.

The age of the child fixed no time limit for Baptism. It did not debar people from receiving it after the age of twelve; nor did it show that they were to wait for Baptism until that age was reached, any more than the accompanying miracle taught that those who were in the state which the diseased woman represented, had to remain in that state for twelve years as she did. The time was mentioned in order to form a connecting link between the two miracles, and to show that the woman was being used to supply a part of the lesson which was to be drawn from the child. The raising of the girl was the object lesson for teaching about the new birth at Baptism; the healing of the woman for teaching about that which also belongs to Baptism, the death unto sin, or the remission of sins—not merely of definite acts of sin, but the state of sin itself inherited from the parents.

In the healing of the woman details were made plain which would have been very obscure if both parts of the lesson had been drawn directly from the child. The taint which the child received at her conception, and which had never left her till she lay there dead about twelve years after her birth, was symbolized by the issue of blood which, for twelve years, that woman had had. There was no real happiness for her with that issue of blood sapping away her strength, and keeping her feeble, hopeless, haunted by death. For her to be able to rejoice in life, to know the blessing of it, and truly to live, she had to be freed from her disease, and her tainted body cleansed. Long and earnestly had she sought for this freedom; but had sought it in vain. It was not to be bought. No human power, or skill,

could give it. At last she ceased to look to earthly means for aid, and came to Jesus. Nothing whatever did she have to offer for her healing; for nothing was left her but her faith. The instant she touched Him she was freed from her disease. There was no gradual parting from it. The change was immediate; as abrupt and complete as when the natural life ends suddenly in death. And as she lay there before Jesus telling of her cleansing, word came that the child was dead.

Although the two great changes which take place at Baptism are treated separately in this lesson, they are the result of the same operation of the power which went forth from Jesus; that power of the Holy Ghost by which His works were done. People are only brought once to Christ in Baptism. The remission of sins, and the entrance into the new life, take place at that one time of coming. They cannot be separated: a fact which Jesus pointed out to His pupils in that statement about the dead child which astonished the people so greatly, and made them laugh Him to scorn; that she was not dead, but sleeping. One who is sleeping is alive; and the life spoken of was that life which comes by the operation of the Holy Ghost at the same time that the freeing from the corruption of sin takes place.

The parable in deeds, by which Jesus then taught them, made plain to the eye the change which takes place unseen. By taking hold of her hand He showed that those who are brought to Him He makes His own; and that henceforth they are His. She, whose hand He held, was plainly dead to the world, and to the things of the world. His calling to her, "Maiden arise!" showed that life was there; a new life; the life which came by the power of the Spirit at the time when the issue of blood was stanchèd; a life not of this world; a life which belongs to the kingdom of God, which hears the voice of Jesus, and obeys Him: for the sleeper awoke, arose from the dead into the presence of Christ, still holding His hand, and being held by Him; His child.

"He arranged that something should be given her to eat"; something to strengthen and preserve the new life which He had given the child. What that represented is not explained here; but it is plain enough that it stood for something which necessarily followed Baptism.

Turning once more to Jairus, the man who was being used to point the lesson for those whom Jesus was training to help Him, we see that in one way he had failed; although in another he had not, for he had been the means of bringing life to his child. He had prayed to Jesus, and brought Him to her; or, as it is often called nowadays, brought his child to Christ. Faith enough for that he had; but not faith enough for a Helper of Jesus, for one who would have to tell people, without a quiver of doubt, that those who are thus brought to Him receive remission of their sins, and are born again into a new life. Whatever he may have learned from the healed woman about the power which came from Jesus, his faith in it was too weak to make him feel sure that it could give life to his child; and when the message came, "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Teacher," his feeble faith seems to have given way altogether. Even the encouragement of Jesus, "Fear not: only believe, and she shall be saved," could not assure him; and his astonishment at the new life which came to her was the surprise of one who saw something which he never really expected to happen. A man like that was useless for convincing others; and so he was forbidden to speak.

In order to be fit for helping Jesus in this part of His work of preaching the good tidings of the kingdom of God, His servants must have the faith which He urged Jairus to have, and which the woman had who was allowed to speak—faith that all who are brought to Him in Baptism receive remission of sins and the new birth: for they have to persuade people to accept Baptism as the only way given to men by which their turning to God can be completed, by which they can begin the life of children of God.

This new life with its eternal issues is of such awful importance that there must have been a natural hesitation in believing that the giving, or withholding, of it would ever be put in the power of human beings. What amount of explanation about this, or, indeed, about any other part of their training, had to be given to those pupils of Jesus we do not know; for the evangelist has only recorded enough to satisfy a man like Theophilus that such and such things formed part of their training. In this case there was no need for him to give any of the explanation whatever; the mere mention of the fact that Jesus brought both of the child's parents into the lesson He was giving, being enough to show how such hesitation was met by Him. For the old life of the child was also a matter of awful importance; and yet, as the three well knew, the bringing of it into existence or not had been put in the power of human beings, the father and mother who were standing there with them. It was enough therefore in this scene, in which the evangelist was summing up so vividly for Theophilus the teaching which Jesus gave His Helpers about Baptism, that there should be seen, side by side, the parents and the pupils—those to whom God had committed the giving of the natural life, and those to whom He was about to commit the giving of the spiritual life.

In keeping with the great importance of the subject, the miracle chosen to illustrate it is one of those about which Theophilus was specially furnished with means for investigation. In common with the others, the account of it is made up of three parts: the natural state of affairs, the word of Jesus, and the result. In this case the part that received the greatest attention was very properly the first. The details given about the sickness of the child, the report of her death, and the absolute certainty of the people of the house that she was indeed dead, pointed out the line of investigation which Theophilus was expected to follow. The bareness of the outline given him shows that, although

the evangelist had made careful enquiry into the case himself, Theophilus, and those like him, were only expected to be satisfied by going to the eye-witnesses mentioned, and hearing the evidence themselves. Those eye-witnesses were Peter, John, and James, and the father and mother of the maiden. The particulars about the father were so carefully given that there could have been no difficulty whatever in finding him. His name was Jairus; his place of residence, the city which Theophilus had already had pointed out to him, the city of the Gerasenes; his position, the ruler of the synagogue. As for the child, she was his only daughter.

Although it was the father who had been kept before the eyes of Theophilus all through the lesson, it closed with the announcement that both the father and the mother were forbidden to speak. It was the same in the account of the miraculous draught of fish. There it was Peter whose career was being followed; and yet the account closed with the statement that the others who were named also followed Jesus. The reason was the same in both cases. The singling out of one gives the impression that there is a contrast between him and the rest. To have closed this account by saying that, of the two witnesses, the father was forbidden to speak, would have been to suggest that the mother was allowed to speak; just as saying that, when they brought their boats to land, Peter forsook all and followed Him, would have been likely to make the reader imagine that James and John did not.

### c. 1.

#### THE PIONEERS

#### ix. 1-6. The sending of the twelve.

The first of the two illustrations, which the evangelist chose for closing the chapter, was the sending of the twelve: an event which not only furnished him with an example of the faith spoken of in the third section, but also enabled



him to bring in some more of the details of the Helpers' Ordination. Some of them he had given in the introduction to the chapter upon the teaching which Jesus began to give, when he showed Theophilus Jesus spending the night in prayer; then calling His pupils to Him and choosing twelve; and after that, as the Head and Source of all power, standing with them by His side, with the work before Him. That beginning of the account of their Ordination was placed after the beginning of the account of their training: now that the account of their training has been completed, that of their Ordination is also completed. Those accounts combined established the instruction which Theophilus had received about the Ordination of Helpers by showing that it was the way which Jesus had laid down for following in His steps as the Christ and preaching the gospel to the poor.

Short as the account is of the sending of the twelve, we find, when we come to look into it, that it touches all the main points about which such an enquirer as Theophilus would seek to know. The standing of the order in the Church, the commission given to its members, the powers entrusted to them, the work assigned to them, and the way in which they were to be provided for, are all dealt with; and Theophilus was satisfied about each and all of them by being shown that they came from Jesus. The condensation of the account was made possible by the fact that he knew all about the order as it then existed, and was only seeking the origin of things well known.

In order that they should be able to carry on their work as pioneers of the kingdom of God, they were given the needful power and authority, and then sent forth by Jesus; commissioned by Him to do the work for which they had been trained, to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.

Their preaching as pioneers would, strictly speaking, have been to people who did not know the kingdom which they proclaimed; and the healing they were to give, for

people who did not belong to that kingdom. Care for the sick would certainly have taught those people about the wonderful love for mankind which fills the kingdom of God, and would have brought home to their hearts the true nature of that great body into which the speakers sought to draw them; but it was for something more than that that it was given to those Helpers to cure diseases. The word translated "diseases" refers more especially to the fruits of evil; and the healing of them was to teach the people the same lesson which the Helpers themselves had learned from the healing of the woman with the issue of blood; the lesson about the healing which takes place at Baptism when the life in the kingdom of God begins.

The directions to the twelve were given as to heralds. Like those messengers of an earthly king, they were to live free of charge; taking nothing whatever with them, and being supported by those to whom they were sent. But they were not to pick and choose. Whatever household received them, that was to be their home whilst in that neighbourhood. People who rejected them showed, by so doing, that they refused to have anything to do with the kingdom about which they were being told. The offer had been made them, but they had deliberately shut themselves out from the kingdom of God and its blessings. Their punishment for not receiving Christ's messengers was that they were to be left to their fate.

The account of their labours is very brief. "They departed, and went throughout the villages preaching the gospel and healing everywhere." Not that their gospel-preaching was confined to villages. The example which Jesus had set them was to go "through cities and villages preaching and bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God"; and that example they evidently followed, for they went "everywhere," to cities, as well as to villages. The mention only of their working in villages was to mark the relative rank of the order in the kingdom of God. In countries which lay

open to attack, people would dwell in and around the towns and villages; so that the mention in the introduction of "the cities and villages" would mean all the people of the country. Then as regards the degrees of importance which places had, there were three divisions; the villages, the cities generally, and the capital city: and to link one or other of those places with an order was as much as to say that that order had a like standing in the kingdom of God. Thus this short note about the work of the Helpers being in the villages showed that theirs was the lowest in rank of the three great orders.

"They departed"; away from Jesus, out of sight of Him. In the boat they could see Him there with them; but now even that help was denied them. Yet they went on their way, strong in faith in their Master, strong in faith in the power and authority given them at their Ordination; went forth to conquer the world.

It was "to preach the kingdom of God and to heal" that they had been sent; to proclaim that kingdom as heralds, and, by bodily healing, give proof of the spiritual healing which would be received by those who entered it; but it was as preaching good tidings and tending those in need, that the evangelist has described them as going. At that time it would have been mainly missionary work amongst those who did not belong to the kingdom that they had to do. But there was also work to be done amongst those who belonged to it, for Jesus Himself had gone through cities and villages preaching, and there would have been many believers; and like as they had to awaken and win unbelievers, and draw them into close and living union with the body of believers, so they had to awaken and win those within the kingdom who had grown listless and cold, and draw them into closer union with the faithful workers by the bonds of a living faith and love.

Both parts of their work were of vital importance to the Church, for they both had to do with keeping up its

numbers; one by adding new members, and the other by stopping the wastage. As congregations grew, it is plain that the latter part of their work would more and more outgrow the purely missionary part; and it was to assure Theophilus about this distinctive work of the order amongst the members of the Church itself, that the evangelist, instead of telling him that they went forth, as commanded, preaching the kingdom of God and healing, told him that they preached the gospel and tended those in need. Seeing that he was only being assured about things essential, it is evident that tending those in need filled a very important place in the upbuilding of the Church. It included the care of the sick and suffering, the fatherless and the widows, the kindly welcome of strangers, and cheering of the lonely and desolate: all of them things that would stop the wastage by drawing people together with the cords of love, and making the whole body of the Church radiant with warmth, kindness and fellow feeling. Such was the glorious work assigned to this the lowest, and necessarily the largest, of these orders in the kingdom of God.

### c. 2.

#### THE PERPLEXITY

##### ix. 7-9. The perplexity of Herod.

For his second illustration the evangelist has chosen the perplexity which men felt about Jesus; their questioning as to who the man really was who was doing such wondrous works: perplexity which the twelve themselves had shown in the boat. The person who furnished the illustration in no way represented the Helpers and their office; for he was a ruler, and no rulership was attached to the lowest order in the kingdom of God. He was, however, only a tetrarch, a subordinate ruler in charge of a part only of a province. His perplexity served to illustrate that from which the Helpers had to be free; but the choice of the man was evidently

made to prepare for the coming chapter: a feature of this treatise already noticed.

Their perplexity in the boat about Jesus was caused by His power as the Son of man over the wind and water; the perplexity of Herod was caused by the various opinions about Him which had been formed from the things He had done, especially the ordination of the twelve, and the power and authority given them, and used by them in their strange work as pioneers of the kingdom of God. Their doings had given rise to the report that He Who sent them was John the Baptist who had enrolled so many by baptism; their stern, symbolic way of shaking off the dust from their feet, that He was Elijah, the prophet who was to come before the great day of the Lord; and their way of giving their message, that He was one of the old prophets, through whom God had revealed Himself, using them as His messengers.

Of the three explanations Herod appears to have favoured the first; until he remembered that by beheading John he had left a mark upon him by which he could be known, and found that Jesus did not bear that mark. So he discarded the Baptist theory, and began puzzling once more as to who Jesus really was.

What the true explanation was, the evangelist, in order to prepare for the next chapter, pointed out by saying that Herod sought to see Jesus—a longing which, as was well known, was gratified by Jesus' being brought before him as claiming to be the Christ.

## CHAPTER G.

ST. LUKE IX. 10-62.

(a). ix 10, 11. (b). 12-56. (c). 57-62.

(a).

ix. 10, 11. And the apostles, when they were returned, declared unto him what things they had done. And he took them, and withdrew apart to a city called Bethsaida. But the multitudes perceiving it followed him: and he welcomed them, and spake to them of the kingdom of God, and them that had need of healing he healed.

(b). 1.

12-17. And the day began to wear away; and the twelve came, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place. But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more than five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy food for all this people. For they were about five thousand men.

And he said unto his disciples, Make them sit down in companies, about fifty each. And they did so, and made them all sit down.

And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake; and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up that which remained over to them of broken pieces, twelve baskets.

## 2.

18-27. And it came to pass, as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Who do the multitudes say that I am? And they answering said, John the Baptist; but others say, Elijah; and others, that one of the old prophets is risen again. And he said unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Peter answering said, The Christ of God. But he charged them, and commanded them to tell this to no man; saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.

And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?

For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in his own glory, and the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels.

But I tell you of a truth, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

## 3.

28-36. And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment became white and dazzling. And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elijah; who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: but when they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

And it came to pass, as they were parting from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and, Let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah: not knowing what he said. And while he said these things,

there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him. And when the voice came, Jesus was found alone.

And they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of the things which they had seen.

#### 4.

37-43. And it came to pass, on the next day, when they were come down from the mountain, a great multitude met him.

And behold, a man from the multitude cried, saying, Teacher, I beseech thee to look upon my son; for he is mine only child: and behold, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly cried out; and it teareth him that he foameth, and it hardly departeth from him, bruising him sorely.

And I besought thy disciples to cast it out; and they could not. And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and bear with you?

Bring hither thy son. And as he was yet a coming, the devil dashed him down, and tare him grievously. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. And they were all astonished at the majesty of God.

#### 5.

43-56. But while all were marvelling at all the things which he did, he said unto his disciples, Let these words sink into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it: and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

And there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. But when Jesus saw the reasoning of their heart, he took a little child, and set him by his side, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this little child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same is great.

And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not



with us. But Jesus said unto him, Forbid not: for he that is not against you is for you.

And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he were going to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them? But he turned, and rebuked them. And they went to another village.

(c).

57-62. And as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But he said unto him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God.

And another also said, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. But Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

## CHAPTER G. IX. 10-62.

### SPOKESMEN

a. ix. 10, 11. b. 12-56. c. 57-62.

a.

ix. 10, 11. *Introduction.* The next part of the work which the Christ was to do, was to proclaim release to captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set the bruised at liberty; and for that part of His work too Jesus trained men to act for Him. Like the Helpers, the pattern on which they were modelled was the great forerunner, John the Baptist. Their qualifications and duties followed, step by step, not only those whose possession by John had helped to vouch for Gabriel's claim to be the messenger of God, but also those foretold of him by Zacharias in the song which recorded that the Child, Whose coming Gabriel had announced, had been conceived: so that the order is, in a way, a standing monument to the evidence for the Incarnation.

In John's career, as outlined by the angel Gabriel, there were two stages; the first of which ended in his turning people to the Lord their God, and the second in making them ready for the Lord. First he preached to the people, and baptized those who repented; prefiguring the work for which the order of Helpers was founded. After that came the things belonging to the second stage of his career, the aim of which was not to turn people to God, but to perfect those who had already been turned to Him; not to gather people into a flock for Christ, but to tend those al-

ready gathered. For the work prefigured by this another class of servants was used; a class about which Theophilus had evidently to be fully informed, and to be clearly shown that the order, and all that he had been taught about it, came from Jesus.

The name of the order is not mentioned. Some of its members are indeed spoken of in the introduction as apostles, but that was whilst they were still Helpers. The name, "apostles," belonged to neither of those two orders. It was merely used in connection with them as a trace-name; to trace the career of those who were "also called apostles," and thereby certify Theophilus about the rule, that to reach the highest order men had to pass through both the lower. Zacharias, however, having declared that John the Baptist would be called a prophet, or spokesman, of the Most High, because he would go before the face of the Lord to do work like that which members of this order would have to do, the name of prophet, or spokesman, may be taken as belonging to them too.

There is nothing surprising in the fact that the name is thus kept, as it were, in the background, for the whole course of the instruction which Theophilus received is dealt with in the same way; the writer having evidently taken it for granted that his intended readers, having also received that instruction, would know at once to what he was referring. Besides it was not a question of the names of the orders, but of their requirements and duties. Theophilus was not seeking to know whether Jesus had set apart a certain name for this order; but whether it were His will that certain things should be required of those who sought to enter it, and that certain work should be done by its members for the flocks intrusted to their care.

Gabriel had foretold that John the Baptist would go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah. It was the spirit of a prophet that Elijah had had; so that going in his spirit meant that John, and therefore those

who would be modelled upon him, would be prophets, or spokesmen, of God. As for the power of Elijah, we learn about that from 3 Kings 17 and 18 (Sep. Ver.). There we find that he exercised it in three ways: first, when, speaking in God's name, he laid a famine upon the land as a punishment for the people's sins, and announced its removal when they repented; secondly, when he taught and helped the widow to keep the commandment of God; and thirdly, when he restored the child whose weakness had destroyed its life. In that spirit and power the work would have to be done which Gabriel had described as being to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.

The evangelist has arranged his account of the training of the Spokesmen in much the same way as he arranged his account of the commission of Jesus. Before he went into details about Jesus' having authority and power to do the several parts of His work as the Prophet like unto Moses, he gave Theophilus a general view of Him and His work. In like manner before going into the details of the Spokesmen's training to do the several parts of their work for Jesus, he has, in this chapter, furnished Theophilus with a general outline of the training which Jesus gave them when fitting them to serve Him in the threefold duties of His office as the Prophet. Moses' work for the people who had been baptized unto him in the cloud and in the sea was made up chiefly of three things—getting pardon for them, teaching them God's laws, and fitting them to conquer their allotted portion of the world and to live there as God's people should—and those same three things make up this work of Jesus as the Prophet like unto Moses.

A few short sentences set before Theophilus the men, and the work which they would have to do when they became Spokesmen. First he was shown, by means of the note, "The apostles, when they were returned, declared

unto Him what things they had done," the new household of Jesus, the men whom He had chosen, trained, and ordained to be His Helpers, coming to Him and laying their work before Him for His verdict thereon. Then he was shown those same men, after their report had been made and accepted, being taken into closer relationship with Jesus. They were still His pupils; but they were entering a new class, beginning another and higher course of instruction: so "He took them, and withdrew apart," or privately, "to a city called Bethsaida"; no longer treating them as servants, but beginning to take them into His confidence as friends. They were taken behind the scenes, so to speak, to be with the Good Shepherd, and see how He did His work; to be with the Prophet like unto Moses, and see how He dealt with His people.

It was like another world, into which Theophilus was gazing: that inner life of Christ, and those men, now treated as His friends, dwelling in the deep calm that surrounded Him, and learning His heart and mind, and the workings of His love. Spokesmen of Jesus have to be very close to Him. The nature of their work requires that the doers of it should be always with their Lord; one with Him in heart and mind; knowing what He wants done, and how He would have it done; and so we find that it was in those new surroundings the candidates were tested, and in them they were trained.

But first of all they were shown what the work was like which they would have to do. It lay amongst people such as those who followed Jesus to Bethsaida; and was what He had declared in the synagogue at Nazareth He had been sent to do: namely, to proclaim release to captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that were bruised. His way of doing it was by receiving the people who followed Him, speaking to them of the kingdom of God, and healing those who had need of healing; so that the work which they would be sent to do

was to welcome, to teach, and to heal those who were trying to follow Jesus.

The beginning of the training outlined in this chapter is found in the account of the cleansing of the leper. It was as the suffering Servant of Isaiah 53:2-6 that Jesus was regarded there, and it is as the suffering Christ that He appears here; the training now given them being such as would guard them against the faults of those speakers who so unceasingly went wrong.

As regards the pattern furnished by John the Baptist, the present chapter only deals with the general description of him as the prophet who would go before the face of the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah; the three things which he would have to do being left for the three following chapters.

*Summary.* The evangelist satisfied Theophilus about this part of his instruction by means of a general outline of the training which Jesus had given for the spokesman-ship.

First of all he showed him Jesus taking the men who had done their work as Helpers well, and testing them, at the feeding of the five thousand, to see if they were fit to be chosen to help the Good Shepherd in the care of His sheep: and then he showed him Jesus, having taken them apart, praying as the suffering Christ, and announcing the great test which every one who would become His Spokesman had to satisfy.

After having assured him about the tests required of candidates, he showed him in the Transfiguration, and in the healing of the boy, and the correcting of the disciples, how sound the instruction was which had been given him about doing the Spokesmen's work.

In the Transfiguration he showed him the light in which the Spokesmen were to regard Jesus, the knowledge which they had to have of Him for Whom they were to speak: in the healing of the man's son, the means by which their

work in the kingdom of God was to be done: and in the rebuking of the erring followers, how, in doing it, they were to behave worthily of representatives of the Son of man.

This done, he closed the chapter with three examples drawn from private life: examples which furnished practical applications of the rule which Jesus had laid down for those who resolve to come after Him; and showed Theophilus more clearly the authority for the kind of self-sacrifice which he had been taught should be required of the Spokesmen of Christ.

b. 1.

FAITHFUL HELPERS.

*Beginning.* v. 12. And it came to pass, while He was in one of the cities, behold, a man full of leprosy: and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face, and besought Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.

*Continuation.* ix. 12-17. The feeding of the five thousand.

If we want to know what Theophilus had been taught about the kind of man a candidate for the spokespersonship should be, we have only to turn to this and the following section and see what kind of man it was that Jesus chose; for the choice of Jesus set the standard. We find, first of all, that He took those who had declared unto Him what things they had done, that is, men who had done their work as Helpers well, and placed them in situations which would show whether they had the necessary marks of fitness, or not.

The things required of them were all fruits of faith in Jesus: a faith, which, in its earlier stage, shows itself in a sureness, like that of the leper, that Jesus has power and authority to supply the suppliant's own needs; and, in its fulness, in a sureness, such as the twelve had shown when they went their way to preach and to heal, that Jesus can

give men power and authority to supply the needs of others. That faith in the power of Jesus to supply through them the needs of others was now tested in another way; one which would show plainly whether they had certain qualities which are needed by those who tend the flock of Christ, for it was helping Him to supply the bodily needs of the people who were following Him.

The feeding of the five thousand was another of the evangelist's referenced miracles. Those referenced miracles filled a very important place in this treatise. Not only did they offer a wide range of cases to those who wished to enquire into the miracles of Jesus, but they also formed the pillars of the proof, which the evangelist was building up, of the instruction which Theophilus had received. It was therefore of the highest importance that he should have such particulars given him as would enable him to examine thoroughly the evidence for them: for unless he were absolutely sure about them, he could have little or no certainty about the things which rested upon them. Those particulars the evangelist always gave. The order of ministering women, for instance, began with the healing of Peter's wife's mother; and we find that sufficient details and references were given for any one to enquire into that miracle. Then at the very beginning of the ministry to which only men belong, and forming the groundwork of the preparation for its first stage, there stood the miracle on the Sea of Galilee; and Theophilus was also furnished with the chief details of that miraculous draught of fish, as well as with the names of eye-witnesses, men who actually took part in it. The new birth at Baptism, the goal of the Helpers' work, was taught by the raising of Jairus' daughter; and references were again given by means of which the reader could assure himself about that miracle also. And now, as we enter upon the shepherding of the flock of Christ, we have given us the feeding of the five thousand; and of this, too, such leading details are described and witnesses given, that



the readers of the treatise, at the time of its publication, could have made the fullest enquiries, and have tested it at every point. The place was the country near Bethsaida. The number of men fed was about five thousand. The food used was five loaves and two fishes; and with that small amount, not only were all the people fully fed, but twelve basketfuls of the broken food remained unused. The witnesses to whom the reader was referred were the men whose names had already been given; "the twelve," less the one with the branded name.

There is this peculiar fact to be noted in connection with this miracle. Although it teaches so plainly about the Food with which Christ endlessly feeds His people, and is given such a leading place in the training of Spokesmen, yet in all that the evangelist tells us about them and their work, there is not the faintest allusion to the Lord's Supper. Even here, although the twelve appear in connection with the miracle, they take part, not as Spokesmen, but as Helpers; as candidates for the spokesmanship whose testing and training had only just begun. The special work of Spokesmen, as given in this treatise, was confined to the three things which the Baptist was to do when he went before the face of the Lord—turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, turning the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and making ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him: their preparation, as described by the evangelist, was to do those same three things, and only those; to do them for Jesus and in His own way; and their training was complete when they had learned to give to the people the welcome of Jesus, to tell them His words about the kingdom of God, and to make them whole as He would have them be. The celebration of the Lord's Supper had no place in their duties as Spokesmen. No authority of Jesus is anywhere cited as giving them the right to preside over it. That great mystery of the kingdom of God, the Holy Eucharist, was not entrusted to this order.

The account of the feeding of the five thousand is divided into three well-defined parts, each of which deals with a quality especially needed for carrying on the corresponding part of the work which Jesus had been doing during the day.

*Forward to help.* (12-14). The first part of that work was receiving people. In a land where hospitality was so religiously observed, there was no need for the evangelist to explain what was meant by the welcome of Jesus. We have only to recall the highest and noblest features of eastern hospitality to understand that when Jesus is said to receive people, it is meant that He gives them a kind and ready welcome, going out, as it were, to meet them, and drawing them into His peace; that He pardons the misdeeds of all who trust themselves to Him, and treats them as His own people; sheltering and refreshing them, and enabling them to go forward upon their heavenward journey.

The twelve not only wanted the people's needs to be supplied, but were so eager to help Jesus that they came and told Him about them, and had a suggestion ready as to how it should be done. Knowing that they were powerless of themselves to satisfy so many, and ignorant as yet of the power of Jesus, they prayed Him to send the people away to get what they wanted elsewhere. But it is the Saviour's servants who have to supply the needs of those whom He would receive: so the answer came back to them, "Give ye them to eat." So small, however, did their little store of food appear to them, and so little did they think that Jesus could increase it for them, that they dared not try. They still resembled the speakers who had so sadly misjudged the suffering Servant; and in their eyes He was only a root in a thirsty land. For their zeal for the people's needs to be of use, they needed faith; a firm faith in Jesus' power. It was not the first lesson upon faith that they had had. In the beginning of their training, they had been shown the power of faith; but the faith which the cleansed leper

had shown was faith in the power of Jesus to supply his own need, and the prayer which had sprung from it was for himself. Now, everything was to be on a higher level. Their care was to be for others; their prayer was to be for others; the faith which they were to have, and which they learned to have when they found that Jesus could feed infinitely with the bread which He brake, was faith not only that He could supply His people's greatest need, but that He could also give His servants power to supply it for Him. To be fit to be used for receiving God's people as Jesus did, they had to believe that they themselves, through Him, could supply their people's need; and strong in that faith, be ready and forward to offer to go and do whatever the occasion required.

*Obedient.* (14, 15). The next thing in the introduction which Jesus did for the people who followed Him was to tell them about the kingdom of God. It was not a repetition of the work assigned to the Helpers—that of proclaiming the kingdom and preaching its good tidings—that He was doing; but the work which had been described by Gabriel as turning the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just. The word which is translated “wisdom” was used for “a thoughtful application of knowledge to the doings of life.” The knowledge by which God-fearing people regulate their lives is the knowledge of the laws of God and of the ways of His kingdom: so that when Jesus was speaking to the multitudes about the kingdom of God, He was teaching them to know and understand its laws and ways, and to rule their lives by them.

It is plain that teachers of the people are only carrying on this work of Christ when they accept the laws and ways of the kingdom as given by Him, and teach them unaltered. That is how it was that the first test of fitness which Jesus now gave those whom He was selecting to teach for Him was obedience; to see if they would accept His orders, give His commandment unaltered to the people, and see that

they understood it, and carried it out. He told them to make the people sit down in groups of about fifty each.

It was no light work that was given them to do, to change that multitude into orderly bodies of men seated on the ground; especially as most of them would neither know, nor understand, why it was being done. There would have been many different opinions, too, about the way of arranging so vast a crowd, and about the rules of purification which should be required of them before the meal: but those Helpers were allowed no choice. There was one way, and only one way, that they could follow and still be servants of Christ; and that was the way which He laid down: and there was only one thing which they should require of the people; and that was that they should obey, and allow themselves to be set down in companies of about fifty each. Nor was it a light thing to go on arranging those thousands in readiness to be fed, and feeling all the time the hopelessness of ever being able to feed them; but in spite of all that the twelve did according to the word of Jesus. They acted as His slaves; as belonging to Him; their own views and inclinations suppressed; having no will but His.

By so doing they had proved themselves to be the kind of men that Jesus wanted to teach the laws of the kingdom of God; for they had shown that they could obey Him, and carry out His commands without questioning and without faltering: that they could be His willing slaves.

*Givers for Christ.* (16, 17). Those Helpers had another test still to undergo; for there were three distinct parts in the work which, as Spokesmen of Jesus, they would have to carry on for Him, and each part called for a distinctive quality in those who were to perform it. Only a very brief account, however, of that test is given; just enough to show Theophilus that nothing was being required of men who sought to be advanced to the second order of the ministry, but what Jesus Himself had required.

The work in question formed the third part of the work

which Jesus had been doing for the multitude; that part in which He had shown the twelve the kind of people God wanted His subjects to be, and how they were to be prepared for Him. He had taught them about it by healing those of the people who had need of healing; or rather, those who had need of being taken care of. Whichever translation we use, two things stand prominent: one, that although those people had been welcomed and taught by Jesus, some were still plainly imperfect, falling below the standard of fitness for the people of God; the other, that those imperfections were such that they could not be removed by the people themselves. They were infirmities, or weaknesses, the relief of which had to come from others; and it was Jesus Who supplied what was needed for healing them. One of the marks which distinguished those whom He chose for this work of helping the infirmities of others was that which was shown by the twelve when supplying the needs of the five thousand.

When we look at the way in which they gave up their five loaves and two fishes, we can hardly fail to be struck with the fact that they had a quality which is essential for the faithful discharge of such a stewardship;—the quality of unselfishness. They were in a desert place, surrounded by thousands of people, who would be sure to sweep the neighbouring country bare of food; and there was nothing between themselves and sharp hunger but those few loaves and fishes. It must have been no slight strain upon their unselfishness to give up all that little store of food for the sake of other people. That it turned out as it did, does not alter the fact that they showed themselves to be unselfish men; men who did not cling to their own possessions; men who could crush the cravings of nature, and give all to the Lord as freely as if they still had plenty for themselves. When their food was given back to them again, blessed by Jesus, the same unselfishness was required: for although it was put into their own hands, it was not to belong to

them; but was to be held in trust for Jesus, to be given away for Him.

Very few words sufficed to show Theophilus that they passed safely through the test, and treated their own property as stewards of Christ, holding it in trust for Him. He was merely told that the people "did eat, and were all satisfied." They had distributed the food entrusted to them for the people; and had done their work so faithfully and well that none went short. Not only had every one had some of that Christ-given food to eat, but all his wants had been fully supplied, and he was satisfied.

That the open-handedness which Jesus required of them had nothing to do with wastefulness, or recklessness, was evident; for after the wants of all had been supplied, the unused pieces of food which Jesus had broken off were gathered up.

#### b. 2.

#### SELF-DEVOTING.

*Beginning.* v. 13. And He stretched out His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him.

*Continuation.* ix. 18-27. Coming after Christ.

What the evangelist told Theophilus about the second mark of fitness was prepared for, in the introduction to the chapter, by Jesus taking the twelve and withdrawing privately to the city called Bethsaida; for it was in connection with the inner life of Jesus, the life revealed to those whom He treated as His friends, that this mark of fitness was given. Outside Bethsaida, they had watched Him doing His work for the multitudes, and had therefore seen it as it appeared to the world at large; but now they were being taken behind the scenes, and, in Jesus praying, shown the secret of being able to do it.

It was the next stage in the preparation for the spokespersonship—whether the candidates were ready to share in

the sufferings of Christ: for Jesus praying was the suffering Servant of Is. 53, in the sufferings and weariness which His work brought upon Him, bowing in prayer before the Father Who had sent Him. And He was praying alone, as one whose "face was turned away"; as one who had touched a leper, and had taken his leprosy. With Him were His pupils; those whom He was training for the spokesmanship, training to carry on the work which He had symbolized when He touched the leper, made known His will, and freed the man from his uncleanness: and they were there to learn the tests they would have to satisfy before being found fit to undertake work which would bring them to God in suffering, weakness, and loneliness, as Jesus was praying there.

Before being given the rule which He laid down for entering His service, they were made to show that they knew clearly Who it was to Whom they were devoting themselves, Who it was they were vowing to serve; lest they should be numbered amongst the speakers who failed, in Is. 53, who saw in the Servant a man unhonoured and unesteemed.

Their first answer recalls the cause of the tetrarch's perplexity. They were asked about "the multitudes"; so that the various views which they mentioned would have been those of the multitudes, spoken of in the introduction, amongst whom He was labouring, and would have been formed from what He had done for them. Some had seen so close a connection between His welcome of them and that of John the Baptist, to whom they had come confessing their sins, that they had declared Him to be John himself, risen from the dead and completing his work. Others again, judging from what He told them about the kingdom of God, and from the way in which He healed those who had need of healing, had come to the conclusion that He was either Elijah, the prophet who was so jealous for God, or one of those old prophets who had been sent to help the people of

God to overcome the temptations into which they had fallen, and do Him perfect service.

Those Helpers, when questioned, were able to say readily enough what the popular opinion about Him was: but Spokesmen of Jesus are not to be echoes of public opinion; so He examined them further about their own personal convictions. Peter answering said, "the Christ of God."

In that answer lay the key to the various views of the multitudes, as well as to that question of Herod, "Who is this about Whom I hear such things?"; for it was the manysided office of the Christ that they had been seeing filled.

The "Christ of God," or "God's Anointed," was a kingly title corresponding to "the Lord's Anointed" of the Old Testament. But it was not for Him as King that His Spokesmen would have to speak; so He charged and commanded those whom He was training up for the spokesman-ship to speak about this to no man. Proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord would not be their work, but preparing for it by carrying out the other part of the work for which He was anointed; that of proclaiming release to the captives, the recovering of sight to the blind, and setting at liberty them that were bruised. They had to know and confess Him as the Christ to the fullest extent of that title: but it was for Him as the suffering Servant that they would have to speak; the Son of man Who must suffer many things; the Christ Who touched the leper, and took away his leprosy. That forbiddal gave assurance to Theophilus for the limits assigned to this order of the ministry.

When Jesus said, "If any man resolve to come after Me," He was speaking of men whose hearts had been moved to devote themselves to Him and His work. There was no need for the evangelist to enlarge upon this to readers who had bowed alone in the presence of God, and, drawn by the power divine, had solemnly vowed, "I give myself to Thee";



or to those who had been thrilled by the appeal, "Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?" and had replied, "Here am I; send me." Nor was there any need for him to explain the expression "to come after Me" as used by Jesus. Its general meaning would have been understood by all: for they would have known from the Scriptures how Elisha "followed after" Elijah; how he left his home and all that he had, and became Elijah's body-servant; and in the spirit and power of Elijah carried on the God-given work after his master had been taken from him.

The test of the genuineness of the resolve to come after Jesus was a threefold one; thus enabling the evangelist to make the same number of divisions in this section that he had made in the former one, and deal with the same three parts of the work. First, the man had to deny himself; secondly, he had to take up his cross daily; and thirdly, he had to follow Jesus. That test had to be satisfied by every one who resolved to come after Christ; whether as the suffering Servant, or as that which is not dealt with in this part of the treatise, the Ruler of the people of God. It applied to those who served Him as the King, as well as to those who served Him as the Saviour; for it was said to all.

The execution scene from which those rules were drawn, was one which might well have occurred when the power of Rome had crushed the people of God. Judging from the use made of it by the great Teacher, it was the execution of a devoted follower; the faithful pupil and servant of some teacher who had gone about telling the enslaved people of the coming and triumph of the kingdom of God. His master having been taken, and condemned to death, the usual death of the cross, the faithful follower deliberately threw his own life away. He gave himself up; took his stand, in the sight of all men, by his leader's side; and, boldly declaring himself to be one of his men, followed him to death: dying without ever having seen that for which he

had laboured, and in which he had longed to share, the kingdom of God coming in power, conquering, triumphant. Whatever the occurrence was from which the saying was drawn, it was something that was well-known to people at the time when Jesus used it; a recognized model of self-sacrifice, worthy of being required of those who were to carry on Christ's work for the kingdom of God.

The three rules which formed this test of fitness were not meant to be satisfied once for all when a man came to offer himself for the work of Christ, and then be laid aside as things of the past; but were meant to form part of his rule of life to the end of his days: and it was to help them to live up to those rules whilst in the offices for which He was training them, that Jesus gave His pupils the three groups of sayings which the evangelist next quoted, one for each part of the rule.

*Deniers of self.* 23. "Let him deny himself."

24, 25. "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?"

If, in the execution scene, we follow the man step by step from the time when he began to make his great resolve, we can see that at the very outset he had ceased to cling to life, and had become indifferent whether he lived or died. He paid no heed to the sacrifices he would have to make, or the dangers he would have to face. His whole being was wrapped up in his leader; all his thoughts were for him, and on him his heart was set.

He had denied, or disowned, himself. His body he no longer treated as his own; as something belonging to him; something for which he had to provide; something which had a claim upon his care to be shielded from harm. Nor did he even regard his life as being any longer his own, or recognize its claim to be preserved. With utter indifference he let his body go to the torture, and his life fall into

the hands of those who would take it way. He had ceased to take himself into account at all.

Such was the denial of self, the first of the marks which show the genuineness of the desire to come after Christ; a mark which had to be borne by all who entered His service, whether as the suffering Christ, or as the King. They had to be men who cast aside all thoughts of self; who took their lives in their hands, ready to do whatsoever their Master might set them to do, and lived only for their Lord and His cause. It was this living for the Lord and His cause which stood in such need of those sayings of Jesus quoted above; for it meant, not merely the risk of the bodily life, but of the life of the soul as well.

It is not hard to see why the knowledge that "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it" would be a help to them, as Spokesmen of Christ, to go on denying themselves. At the head of their work would stand the welcome which their Lord wanted given in His name to His wandering people. Those to whom this welcome was to be held out would all be sinners; stained with sin of one kind or another, of one degree or another, from the blot on the robe of righteousness to the reeking foulness of the outcast; all would be impure, imperfect; and all in need of the Saviour. They would all have to be sought out, rescued from evil, brought back to the fold of Christ, and received in His name.

Who can touch pitch and not be defiled? How can the companionship of the foul and unholy ever fail to be an influence for evil? Is it possible for any one to listen to confessions of ill-doing without losing purity of heart and mind? Must not servants of Christ, for the safety of their own souls, keep aloof from such people. But the answer was, "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it." The shepherd who puts himself first, setting the salvation of his own soul before that of the souls of his flock; the shepherd

who would let them perish rather than endanger himself, shall lose that life which he so selfishly sought to preserve.

The Good Shepherd spared not Himself when seeking His sheep; neither must those who serve Him. They have to go and seek them as He did; and for a man to go amongst the fallen and touch them in their foulness as Jesus touched the leper, he has indeed to deny himself. It is not only that he has to set at nought all natural likings and dislikings, but he has also to risk his very soul by deliberately entering into surroundings from which all who seek eternal life must flee; by deliberately associating with the outcast and vile. But Christ's promise has been given, that whosoever shall lose his life for His sake, the same shall save it; and the life which the servant is casting away for His Master's sake, is safe in that Master's care. Regardless of the dangers which will assuredly beset him, the man who resolves to serve the Physician of souls gives himself, body and soul, to His cause.

Still another warning was given them to help them to go on denying themselves as servants of Christ. The position in which they would stand with regard to their fellow-men, the inestimable value of the spiritual treasures put into their charge, would place all things earthly within their grasp; and the temptation would come to them to act as others would act in the kingdoms of the world, and grow great by heaping to themselves earthly treasures, influence, and power. The safeguard against that was the saying, "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and destroy himself, or suffer damage?" Turning aside from the service of Christ, ceasing to deny himself as the Master counts denying self, even if it does not completely destroy the man's existence as a servant of Christ, seriously injures him as such; and nothing in this world can compensate a man for that.

*Daily cross-bearers.* 23. "Let him take up his cross daily."

26. "For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in His own glory, and of the Father, and of the holy angels."

The faithful follower took up his cross, and at once became a changed man; changed in his relationship to his leader, changed in his relationship to his fellow-men.

There was a vast difference between being with that leader as he went through the length and breadth of the land, welcomed by adherents on every side; and keeping with him when fallen into the hands of his enemies, and doomed to death. Whatever rank that follower may have held before, however deeply he may have been taken into the counsels of his chief, the bond between them could never have been so close as that which knit them together when, after casting away all thought of self and taking his stand by his leader's side, he deliberately took up his own cross, and shared in his condemnation: openly declaring himself to be his follower; his more than follower, his friend, true and unashamed.

Becoming a cross-bearer had also changed his relationship to his fellow-men. The same people were still around him, but he no longer belonged to them; their lives and their ways, their rules of conduct and their aims in life, were no longer his. He had parted company with them, and had entered another class of beings. He had become one of a class despised and rejected of men: for he was bearing the cross, the badge of shame, and had branded himself as an outcast. The contemptuous pity of the worldlings for a man who would take a step so unusual would have been his; and he would also have had to meet the urgings of his late comrades, who would have liked to take the reproach of their weaker devotion away by getting him to return and fall in with the ordinary ways of men: but in spite of all, he stood by his leader's side bearing the cross.

Whoever wanted to come after Christ, the despised and

rejected of men, would also take this step, if his desire were genuine, and would declare himself Christ's man, openly and unashamed; in spite of the fact that his Leader and His cause were looked down upon by the world.

It was made plain enough to those pupils of Jesus that it would by no means be easy to bear the badge of the cross, and be always true to it: and no wonder; for the work that is specially connected with it is that which He was doing when He was speaking about the kingdom of God to those whom He had welcomed, and was teaching them what they would have to be and do as members of it. They would have to teach as He did; to set for a standard His own high standard of life; to teach unaltered the laws of God as taught by Him: and to uphold the laws of God as taught by Jesus is to clash with the world; to live like Jesus is to brand oneself as eccentric. The man who does this work for Christ has to endure the scorn and derision of the world, as well as to withstand those who fear to face shame for Jesus by serving Him thus; and the proof of the man is the way in which he bears this reproach of Christ, the notice which he takes of the opinion of others. He who bears the badge of Christ belongs to Him; is Christ's man. He looks only to the Master. He seeks His approval alone. The onlookers count for nothing. What Jesus wants done, how Jesus says it is to be done, is all in all to him. By that he stands, regardless of what men think or say.

It has to be so: for the man's duty will be to teach people to take Christ for their pattern, and His words for their guide; and he cannot do it properly unless he himself is Christ's true man, and holds to Him and His words. The temptation will ever be appealing to him not to go against public opinion; but to be silent about those laws of God which condemn fashionable vices, to smooth down such teaching of Jesus as jars with accepted customs and views, and to compromise with those who do not want to keep the laws which Jesus laid down for His people to fol-

low: in short, to be ashamed of the words of Christ. So great is the danger of yielding to this temptation, as well as to that of being ashamed of Christ Himself, that there is attached to this test an awful warning of the fate of those shamefaced servants of His who fail Him in His humility. "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in His own glory, and of the Father, and of the holy angels," those faithful messengers who do God's will so perfectly.

The man has to take up his cross each day, as if for the first time; daily he has to renew his vows; daily to declare himself Christ's man. Daily, unceasingly, the Spokesman of Jesus has to recall his position with regard to Him and to his fellow-men; always openly belonging to Him, always unflinchingly upholding His words.

*Followers of the Son of man.* 23. "And follow Me."

27. "But I tell you of a truth, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God."

The third and last test, which those who resolved to come after the suffering Christ had to satisfy, is found in the death-journey of the man with the cross as, bearing his burden, he went steadfastly on; his heart staunch and true to the leader he followed.

It was a strange state of being. The man, indeed, looked much the same. All the powers of mind and body which belong to a human being were still his; and yet he was almost completely changed: so much of what makes up the life of man had been blotted out from his existence. The duty of supporting life by providing food, clothing, and such-like necessities, the getting of which takes up so large a part of a man's time, and calls for such careful forethought, that duty was his no longer. Such thoughtfulness for himself would have been out of place in one going to his death. And he had turned his back, too, upon all that

the human heart holds dear. Home, with its hallowed ties and its claims upon the heart of man, had gone out of his life forever. The business of life in all its forms had passed from his hands. Dead to the past, cut off from all earthly future, the only life left to him lay in the present, bound up with the leader to whom he had given himself, and whom he was following to death.

Those who come after Christ now have to follow Him thus until death. It is only a difference of time. There has to be the same absence of carefulness about the needs of the body; the same severance from all that man holds dear; the same close life with Christ to the end of their days.

The work which especially called for such otherworldliness and utter devotion of self to Christ and His cause, was that of setting at liberty them that are bruised; rescuing and helping the enslaved and the weak. It was to those who were devoting themselves to that work that the encouragement was specially given, "I tell you of a truth, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." But it was not for all of His hearers. It is not given to every one to help others in their weaknesses; and not all of those who stood around Jesus would reach that state of oneness with the will of God which is spoken of as seeing His kingdom. Who the chosen ones would be none could say. There was nothing by which the eye of man could distinguish them as they stood there. Jesus alone could tell. What they knew was that to become a perfect follower of the Son of man and, praying in His name, be able to set at liberty them that are bruised, they would have to see the kingdom of God; let His will have full and free rule in their hearts and in their lives; be wholly His; wholly given to the work of Jesus: and also that, on the strength of Jesus' own promise, it was possible for them to attain that state of perfection; and attaining it, to see the triumph of that kingdom's power in the freeing and restoring of the bruised.



## b. 3.

## KNOWING THE SUFFERING SERVANT.

*Beginning.* v. 14. And He charged him to tell no man: but go thy way, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

*Continuation.* ix. 28-36. The Transfiguration.

Those who carried on the work which Jesus had been doing in the introduction to the chapter, and received people in His name, taught them for Him, and tended those who sought Him, had necessarily to know Him in the character in which He wanted to be represented. How Theophilus had been taught to regard Him can be gathered from the evidence which the evangelist gave him in support of it: namely, the character in which Jesus taught men, whom He was training to do those three things for Him, to know Himself.

It was by showing himself to the priest, and doing as Moses had commanded that the cleansed leper had testified to the people: not by speaking for Him Who had taken his leprosy away. That, he had been forbidden to do because he had not the needful knowledge of Jesus. Those who speak for Jesus need that knowledge whose lack is bewailed in Is. 53:4, the verse which has to do with this section. "He bears our sins, and is pained for us," the speakers had confessed, acknowledging Him as their Saviour: but for all that they had failed; and their failure had been due to their mistaken view of the suffering Servant. "We accounted Him to be in trouble, in suffering, and ill-treatment," said they; and because they regarded Him thus, they could not look up to Him as they ought. It was very natural, when Jesus of Nazareth was upon the earth, that people should fail to see the glory which encircled One Whom sinners and outcasts surrounded; it was natural that they should fail to recognize the authority of the

divine Lawgiver in Him Whom their own lawgivers condemned; or to know that in Him Who yielded so meekly to ill-treatment was to be found the only power by which humanity could be uplifted to the height intended for it by God: and it is still natural for men to do so; for the proper point of view lies far above the level of man. Those who are to become Spokesmen of Christ have to learn how the suffering Servant is viewed by God; they have to see Him and His burden of sin and woe, not by the light of earth, but by the light divine; to see in Him, not merely a great Teacher, but the Revealer of the will of God; and listen to His directions for the healing of mankind as coming from the Creator Himself.

By one of those short notes of his, so saving of elaborate explanations, the evangelist put Theophilus in touch with what he was going to tell him about all this. The beginning of the note, "It came to pass about eight days after these sayings," showed that he was going on with the training of men who had resolved to come after the suffering Christ, and, in accordance with His rulings, were denying themselves, taking up their cross daily, and following Him: the giving of the time as "about eight days after," instead of after six days, pointing out that what he was about to relate had to do with something which the mention of eight days would readily suggest. When we recall the account of the cleansed leper which this chapter is paralleling, we have no difficulty in seeing that it was what was typified by the offerings made eight days after the man had shown himself to the priest, and had been pronounced clean.

"Taking with Him Peter and John and James, He went up into the mountain to pray." The mountain to which He took them would be the same as that which the evangelist had used to represent "the mountain of the Lord" when he was showing Theophilus Jesus establishing the House of God to which all nations would come, and those who

wanted to learn the laws of God, and walk in His ways. Peter, John, and James served as references for what took place; and their training as samples of that which the rest of the Spokesmen received from Jesus.

Their initiation into the workings of the household of God began with a deeper knowledge of the Servant of God Who was its Head. Of the two functions of the Christ, the Prophet and the King, only the former belonged to Jesus as the suffering Servant; and it was as the Prophet that His pupils were being taught to know Him on the mountain in the three scenes now given. Each of the scenes applies in order to one of the three parts of the work already mentioned, receiving, teaching, healing.

Our grasp of the lessons contained in what is commonly known as the Transfiguration, will be strengthened somewhat if we notice the order in which the evangelist has made the characters in the three scenes pass before Theophilus. The first scene opens with Jesus praying; and as He is praying Moses and Elijah appear in glory: the next scene opens with Moses and Elijah departing; and as they are going the cloud appears: the last scene opens with the cloud still there, but only Jesus to be found; the Voice out of the cloud explaining about Him and enforcing the lesson. The key to each scene is found in what the evangelist has made its opening.

ix. 29-32. *The Advocate*. The first of the offerings made by the cleansed leper was the trespass-offering. On the eighth day he stood at the door of the tabernacle of testimony, touched with the blood of the lamb which had been slain; testifying thereby to the people that it was by the blood of the Lamb of God, Whom it represented, that he was made fit to stand there before the Lord. It was a voiceless testimony: but that was all that the man had been allowed to give; for he only knew Jesus as He had appeared when all men shrunk from Him for having touched a leper. Messengers of the great Physician have likewise

to be able to bear the same personal testimony, that "Surely He hath borne our sins and is pained for us"; but before being sent to speak for Him they need a deeper insight into Him and His work; such an insight as that which He gave to the three upon the mount.

When we look at the course of training which those men received after their mission as Helpers was over, we can see that they were being taken deeper and deeper into the inner life of Jesus, and were receiving lessons not given to His ordinary pupils. First they had been taken to be with Him in private, and had seen how He dealt with those who came to Him; and now that they had resolved to come after Him and share in His labour of love for mankind, they were treated as His bosom friends, one in heart and mind with Him. They were taken to be with Him as He was praying: taken into the deep mystery of His prayer; taken behind the veil, and shown the Son of man pleading with the Father; shown Him as they would have to speak for Him. They were learning about Him as the Way: a necessary lesson, if they were ever to become able to carry on for Him the part of His work with which this first scene on the mount of Transfiguration has to do; that of receiving sinners, and restoring them to the place in God's kingdom which they had lost. None can be restored until the sins which are shutting them out have been forgiven; and forgiveness can only be got through the intercession of Him Who was praying there upon the mount.

Jesus was praying as Moses, the servant of God, had prayed so often interceding for his people; and as He prayed, another look came over His face. No longer was it the look of one who was making his plea, but of one whose plea had been granted. His prayer had been made to God the Father; and from God the Father it was that the answer had come which changed the look on the face of Jesus. The very clothes that He wore, all travel-stained and soiled, defiled, in the eyes of man, by the touch of the leper, the

outcast, and impure, became white and dazzling. The foulness of sin, that awful disease which shuts out its victims from the presence of God, left no stain or defilement on the robe of Christ's righteousness. That glorious sight was the suffering Servant seen in His true light; the great Physician and His work of redeeming love as viewed by God Who sent Him; the Advocate with the Father, His prayer being answered; Jesus their Lord as they were to serve Him.

"And behold, two men were talking with Him." The two, who came upon the scene and completed this part of the object lesson which the three pupils of Christ were receiving, were Moses and Elijah. Both were prophets, or spokesmen, of God; holders of a similar office to that for which the three themselves were being trained: and they stood there in the presence of Jesus, like Spokesmen of Christ in position to carry on His work of welcoming. He to Whom they were speaking was the Prophet in Whose mouth God would place His word (Deut. 18:18); Whose message would be the message of God. They were seen in glory; the glory which comes from being associated with Jesus as the Saviour of the world; beholding His face, and talking with Him as His friends: and they were speaking of "His exodus" which He was about to complete at Jerusalem; when, as the Lamb of God, He would offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin, and then, rising from the dead, would ascend into heaven, there to be forever man's Advocate with the Father.

*Seeing the glory of the Redeemer.* Then the evangelist drew the eyes of Theophilus to the three onlookers, and pointed out to him some things which bore upon the instruction he had received. The first he summed up in the words, "They saw His glory"; the glory that showed itself in Jesus' face, when, pleading for sinners, His prayer was answered, and He was made the channel for the outpouring

of that mercy and pity in which the glory of God shines forth.

At first the three could see nothing of all this. The natural eye cannot. In the midst of that glorious scene they were heavy with sleep, wearied, indifferent; and it was only when they ceased to yield to the flesh, and by the grace of God became fully awake, that they were able to see His glory, and become fit to act as His messengers, speaking for Him as the Way to God, the Advocate with the Father pleading for sinners and receiving the answer to His prayer, and bearing to people the pardon which He had obtained for them.

*Standing with the Redeemer.* The next thing which the evangelist pointed out to Theophilus was what the three noticed in Moses and Elijah. "They saw the two men that stood with Him." The words do not mean that they were merely standing by Jesus' side; but that they were "standing together" with Him, allied with Him, acting with Him, one in heart and mind with Him: standing there, not as the condemners of sinners, but as pleading for them; speaking to Jesus of His atonement for them.

The same awakening by God was needed for the three to see this also: to see that human beings can stand thus in relation to Christ and the fallen, and share in His great work of welcoming sinners; and to see what was being taught by that sight before them. For it taught them that this welcoming is inseparable from Jesus; and can only be done in union with Him by men sharing in His heart, in its yearnings for the return of the wanderer, for the drawing near of the outcast, for the coming close of the fallen one still foul from his fall. The position of those two prophets taught them, too, that the position of Christ's Spokesmen when setting about this work of welcoming is by His side, ready to welcome all whom He would receive: that it has to be done in His presence, with Him as the

Judge; each case referred to Him, each verdict confirmed by Him.

ix. 33, 34. *The Sun of righteousness.* The second gift which the cleansed leper had to make was the sin-offering: the offering which testified that the man, forgiven by God, had given up all his old ways, and would henceforth try to live according to His laws. The state of reformation which he had then reached was that of the multitudes whom Jesus had welcomed, and to whom He was speaking about the kingdom of God: representatives of those who, having been restored to their place in that kingdom, want to know more about its laws and ways, and how they are to keep them. Those who teach such people for Jesus have to tell them about the all-embracing commandments which God has given His people; how those general principles apply to the many and various circumstances of life; and what is to be the rule in such or such a case: in short, they have to act towards their flocks as lawgivers. In this chapter the evangelist does not go into details of what men require for doing this work, but simply points out, in the course of training which Jesus gave, some great essentials about which Theophilus had been instructed.

The first great essential for becoming a good and powerful teacher of God's will forms the subject of the second scene upon the mount; that in which the three friends of Christ, their backs turned upon the world and its wisdom, its teachers of righteousness and its standards of holiness, are looking to Jesus, Moses, and Elijah.

The key to the scene is found in the departing of Moses and Elijah,—Moses, whose law was to be remembered, and Elijah, who was to be sent before the great and glorious day of the Lord,—the two spoken of in Mal. 4., the chapter which tells of the rising of the Sun of righteousness. They were still there when Peter spoke, and their words were even then ringing in his ears, but they were taking their final departure; for their work was done, and they had left all

in the hands of Him Who had come to fill up the law and the prophets, the Sun of righteousness Who had arisen.

A sun is a source of light. The light which comes from the Sun of righteousness, or of justice, as the word is also translated, enables people to see how to live aright in the kingdom of God. Shining upon Moses and the prophets, upon the laws and ways of the kingdom of God proclaimed by them, it makes those laws and ways appear in their true light; shows what is lacking in them, and makes them so plain in their minutest details, that all can see and know what they ought to do. That Sun arose when Jesus began His work; for Jesus of Nazareth is the Sun of righteousness.

*Rejoicing in the light.* It was as the Sun of righteousness, the great Prophet who was to give people the true knowledge of the will of God by speaking to them as God would command him (Deut. 18:18), that Jesus was now making Himself known to the three; and the first great essential for coming after Him in His work of teaching the people about the kingdom of God had to do with seeing and knowing Him thus. Peter's vision was not yet perfect. Although he addressed Jesus as the Master, or Chief, of all who were there, recognizing His rulings above those of both Moses and Elijah, what he saw did not fully support the instruction which Theophilus had received, until its meaning was made clear by the coming of the cloud. But in one thing he did furnish the required example; and that was in the joy which he felt in being there and seeing the light of the Sun of righteousness; in the delight which he took in getting a deeper, clearer knowledge through Jesus of the will of God, the laws and ways of His kingdom; a joy so deep that words almost failed him, and all that he could say was, "Master, it is good to be here." In that unceasing joy as a learner lies the well-spring of the life and power of the teaching of an Instructor for Christ.

*Reverencing the oracles of God.* As Moses and Elijah



were departing, Peter made his request. "Let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He spoke of them as if they were merely great teachers, men amongst men, whom he wanted to have dwelling there always before him, so as to be able to listen to their beautiful precepts. Friends of Christ do not treat God's mouthpieces like that. They ought always to want to have Jesus, Moses, and the prophets before them, but not in the way that Peter suggested. He did not know what he was saying; and it was only when the cloud came and overshadowed them, and they feared as they entered into it, that he and his fellows became an example to Theophilus of the attitude of Christ's Instructors towards the revealed will of God.

That cloud was a sign to them that God was present making known His will; like as it had been a sign to the people in the wilderness when it rested upon mount Sinai, and Moses stood before the Lord. They saw it overshadowing the three before them; and learned that all of them, "Moses and the prophets," and Jesus as the Prophet, were spokesmen for God through whom He made known His will; and that what they had been listening to was the message of God Himself.

Then they found themselves entering into the cloud, as Moses had entered into it on mount Sinai in order to learn the will of God, the laws and ways of His kingdom which he was to adapt for the people under his care; and they entered into it with fear. It was that fear which confirmed Theophilus in the instruction that he had received about the way in which he was to regard the message of Jesus of Nazareth, Moses, and the prophets. It had to be approached with reverence; treated as the oracle of God; listened to as coming from God Himself.

ix. 35, 36. *The Healer of mankind.* The third scene opens with the cloud still resting upon the mount, as it had rested upon mount Sinai when the people were waiting below till

Moses, the servant of God, should come down from His presence and train them to be God's own people, fit to dwell in the Promised Land. Once more the cloud was the sign of God's presence; and once more He was making known His will about the way in which He would have His people prepared.

These last two scenes are bound very closely together; for together they make up the description of the Christ in Mal 4:2: the former scene showing Him as the Sun of righteousness which should arise, the present one as the Fountain of life having "healing in His wings." It was the same with those two offerings of the cleansed leper which supplied the beginning of the instruction which these two scenes contain; so closely were their teachings knit together that the same kind of animal had always to be used for both of them. They had to do with two great stages in the fitting of the man for his place amongst the people of God: the sin-offering showing that he had resolved to turn from his sinful ways, and to follow the holy way of God's law; whilst the whole burnt-offering, the offering which belongs to this scene, showed that he had resolved to give himself wholly to God. This lesson has therefore to do with helping people to become wholly God's.

The work itself forms the third part of Jesus' work with the multitudes: that which was described by the words "them that had need of healing He healed." Those whom He was healing were people who had already come to Him, and had been welcomed, and taught about the kingdom of God: in other words, they were people who had repented of their ways, and had turned to Christ and found pardon; and had also learned from Him what their lives in God's kingdom should be. But something more was needed before they could live their lives as they ought. Like the great multitudes who came to Jesus after the leper was cleansed, they had also "to be healed of their infirmities."

All know what infirmities, or weaknesses, are. All know

of something in which they are liable to fail; and in which, in spite of all their watchfulness and care, they often do fail: unable to keep up to Christ's standard of righteousness. And the sad sight is only too common, of one who has reformed, who has known the joy of the welcome of Christ, and knows the way of holiness, feebly sinking beneath the wave of the old temptation as soon as ever it comes surging upon him. It is not only in the struggle with the appetites in their grossness that this lack of strength shows itself. At every step which the seeker after righteousness strives to take upwards, weaknesses beset him; and he is constantly finding that he cannot do the good which he wants to do.

It is a very crude scheme for the uplifting of humanity, which does not set some standard of well-being for the workers to try to make people reach; which does not tell them how to help people to reach it; and which lays down no rules for their guidance in dealing with the two great classes of cases with which they will meet, those willing to be helped, and those who refuse. Very much depends upon the standard that is fixed. It is when people are trying to lead better lives that they become aware of their weaknesses, and their need of healing. The higher the state of life aimed at, the harder it is to reach it, and the more do weaknesses make themselves felt. The highest standard that can be set for created beings is that of being perfect members of God's kingdom, fit to dwell in the presence of God Himself; and Theophilus had to know whose system the Spokesmen would have to follow in raising people to that standard, and making them ready for the Lord.

The question was answered by his being shown the authority for setting aside all leaders of reform, no matter how great and useful their systems may have been, and making the system in whose ways he had been instructed the only one to be followed. The authority cited was the very highest that there could possibly be; the authority of

God Himself: for as the cloud was the sign of God' presence, so the voice out of the cloud was the sign that it was God Who was making His will known. When the voice came, Jesus was found alone. Moses and Elijah, the great trainers and uplifters of the people, had vanished; and only Jesus, the Sun of righteousness that had arisen with healing in his wings, was left to Whom His followers could turn for the healing of humanity; only Jesus to tell them how to take away the blemishes from people's natures, how to free them from their imperfections and failings, and make them worthy members of the kingdom of God. Servants of God are left no choice: for the decree of the Creator was, "This is My Son, My Chosen; hear Him." Jesus of Nazareth is the Prophet like unto Moses Whom all are to hear; He it is Whom all servants of God are to obey, Whose system alone they are to follow.

*Following Him as the Son of God.* Our point of view is still that of Theophilus watching the training of the three in order to find out upon what grounds the instruction rested which he had received about healing people; and looking thus with him at what the evangelist set before him, we can see that it rested in the first place upon the decree of God that Jesus, and Jesus alone, is to be followed; whilst of the two lines along which the instruction ran, one rested upon the fact that He is the Son of God, and the other upon His being God's Elect. As in the other scenes, the first of these has to do with what the Spokesmen require in order to be properly equipped for the work, and the other with the way in which they have to do it.

As with the other offices of the Christ, they had to know Him in the character in which they were to serve Him; to know Him as the Doer of the work: and they learned that it was as the Son of God that they would have to follow and serve the suffering Servant; as the Son of God going forth to war against the powers of evil to deliver God's people, heal their infirmities, and bring about that

perfect state of life, that state of peace and happiness, which belongs to the kingdom of God. It was as His soldiers that they would have to war against evil, and set the bruised at liberty; as His servants, heal and restore them: always under Him; and always sure of victory, for their Leader is the Son of God Himself.

*Following Him as the Chosen One.* The second part deals with the way in which the work is to be done; and here again the way laid down for followers of Christ was so remarkable, that Theophilus had to be satisfied about it by being shown that it rested upon the declaration of God Himself. "This is My Chosen One; hear ye Him."

As the word translated "Chosen One" shows, the choice had been made in a by-gone time. Long before, as we learn from Is. 49: 7-9, God had chosen one, whom we know as the Servant, to say "to them in bonds, Go forth, and to them that are in darkness to show themselves," and to help the freed ones on their way. Jesus had already shown in the synagogue at Capernaum that He had authority and power to do that work; and now God Himself identified Him as the One Whom He had chosen.

One short rule was given them for their guidance in carrying on this part of the work of Christ: "Hear Him." Those who did it had to work in the way which God's Chosen One laid down. It was by the directions which He gave that the bondmen of evil were to be set free, the weak ones strengthened, the people prepared for the Lord. No choice was allowed them either about the manner of doing the work, or the means to be used. They were tied down by the unqualified command, "Hear Him." To God's Elect as their Leader, and to Him alone, they were to look; in His way, and in His alone, the work was to be done, no matter how strange and powerless that way might seem to be.

The place which the Transfiguration fills in this account of the founding of the ministry is of such importance, that

it is included amongst those events for which references were given to Theophilus. The place was "the mountain"; a well-known spot, apparently the same where they were gathered together once before to be chosen for training to be Helpers. The eye-witnesses were Peter, John, and James. The order in which their names are given is that in which they are mentioned as taking a leading part in this and the rest of the events recorded in this chapter. In the other instances where references were given to Theophilus, there was plenty of additional evidence to uphold the statements made; but in this case there was none. The three were the only eye-witnesses, and no one else was even told about it at the time. It was to account for this lack of other evidence that the foot-note about the silence of the three was added.

#### b. 4.

#### FELLOW-WORKERS WITH JESUS.

*Beginning.* v. 15. But so much the more went abroad the report concerning Him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed of their infirmities.

*Continuation.* ix. 37-43. The healing of the man's son.

Tending the flock of Christ is a work of such great responsibility, that no one, who really knows what it is, would dare of himself to undertake it; nor even when called and sent to do it would he venture upon it without fear and trembling. For upon the shepherd comes the care of the flock in all their troubles of soul, their blunders and their failings; upon him lies the responsibility for their spiritual well-being; his duty it is to restore the wanderer, enlighten the ignorant, and repair the damaged natures; and who is sufficient for these things? The mistakes of a shepherd too are of such awful importance. They are not mere earthly mistakes affecting the body; but failures in spiritual work, affecting the soul. Before a man is sent to do work so perilous to himself and to others, it is of vital

importance, both for his own peace of mind and for the well-being of his flock, that he should first be taught how that work should be done. Such instruction Theophilus had received; and it was to satisfy him about its correctness that the evangelist set before him the healing of the afflicted boy.

The scene forms a sequel to that which followed the sending of the cleansed leper; where, with no one to attend to them, the crowds, which had gathered at the news of Jesus' reception of the outcast, were seen seeking to hear, and to be healed of their infirmities. Its opening part resembles that which followed the first night of prayer upon the mountain, when Jesus came down with some of those whom He was training to be His Helpers, and stood with them on the level place; having close by them the rest of His pupils, and before them the multitude amongst whom their work would lie. Now it was with some whom He was training to be Spokesmen, that He came down from the mountain, and stood with the rest of His pupils close by; the people amongst whom their work would lie, those who had to be welcomed, taught, and healed, being represented by the multitude which met Him. What took place is to be viewed as a lesson which was being given to the three who were with Him at the Transfiguration; the men whose training was furnishing the sample of that which Jesus gave for the spokesmanship.

It was a painfully vivid sketch of the onslaught of evil that the evangelist placed before Theophilus: only a sketch, but so wonderfully drawn that any one, who had taken part in that great war with evil which every soul has to wage as it struggles heavenwards, would have been able to fill in its outlines. Some old habit of thought or feeling, for instance, some old imagination or desire, which seemed to have passed away for ever, suddenly returns; or some evil impulse finds an entrance, and, surging over the heart, sweeps all before it. The cry of sorrow and shame for hav-

ing yielded rises in penitence to God; a cry that is never made unheard: but an entrance having been gained, the temptation still goes on; and there begins again that awful struggle between good and evil, between the spirit and the flesh, which so convulsed the boy that he foamed. It is a struggle in the dark: for the temptation swells and spreads until it has shut out everything else; and the eyes of the victim are blinded to the way of escape, blinded to all that is pure and holy, and he can neither see where to turn, nor what to do. At times, slowly and reluctantly, as it were, it passes away: not that the person has gained the victory; but because, for some reason or other, the evil influence has for a while let go its hold. As the text describes it, "it hardly departeth from him, bruising him sorely"; and the person is left helpless, still open to another attack, for his infirmity is unhealed.

After the fashion of this treatise, the opening words served to point out to Theophilus the topics of the lesson which was being drawn from the scene. The strong likeness between the father's cry, "I beseech Thee to look upon my son, for he is my only child," and Ps 24:16 (Sep. Ver.), "Look upon me, and have mercy upon me; for I am an only child and poor," makes it plain that the needs of the boy were the same as those of the psalmist—to have his sins forgiven, to be taught the way of righteousness, and to be helped in his weaknesses—and that the lesson which was being given to the pupils of Christ was to satisfy those needs.

The title "Teacher," the word by which the evangelist translated the name by which the man addressed Jesus, gave Theophilus the key to the doing of that work. It all had to be done in Jesus' way. In every part of their service Spokesmen of Christ had to act as His pupils, taught by Him about everything; venturing on nothing by themselves, but coming to Him at every step to learn what answer to give to those who were seeking His welcome, what to teach



them about the laws and ways of the kingdom of God, what to do for them in their weaknesses. And as we follow the treatment of the case, we find that at every step they were taught to turn to Jesus. By Him, with Him, and through Him was to be their rule of service. They were taught to be workers together with Him; having Him always with them, and trusting to Him to guide, complete, and perfect their feeble doings.

The leading figure in the scene is the father of the boy. Filling a position resembling that which they themselves would hold as shepherds of the flock of Christ, he served to point the lesson for them. His conduct as an earthly father taught them what theirs would have to be as spiritual fathers. As shepherds of the flock of Christ they would have many under their care; but each one would have to be as dear to them as that only son was to his father; and what he did for his son, they, as fathers to their people, would have to do for every one of them in need. There is one part of the lesson, however, for which the father of the boy was not used. That part was supplied by means of their fellow-pupils, after much the same fashion that the part of the lesson upon Baptism for which the girl was not used was supplied by means of the woman with the issue of blood.

The three divisions which are found in every section of this chapter are here made up of

1. The father crying to Jesus for his son.
2. The loss of power of the pupils of Jesus to help the boy.
3. The father bringing his son to Jesus, and Jesus returning him healed.

As before, the three parts of Jesus' work with the multitudes that followed Him to Bethsaida, the welcoming, teaching, and healing, are dealt with in their regular order in these three divisions.

ix. 38, 39. *By love unfeigned.* The first thing about which Theophilus was told was, how the Saviour of men, Whom

the Father in His great love had made the Way to Himself, wanted His work of welcoming poor sinners and outcasts done by those who were to be His fellow-workers. In order to understand the scene which showed him this, we have to recall that other scene with which it is connected: that which followed the report about the leper who had come to Jesus. The report had spread far and wide that Jesus had received that leper, and had not only assured him of His willingness to make him clean, but had actually cleansed him; but all that Theophilus had been shown was Jesus, the Cleanser of the leper, and the great multitudes that had gathered together on the strength of that report. Nothing was shown him of any condition of those people which would correspond to that of leprosy; nor was he shown any one there to care for them and bring them to Jesus. What was lacking in that scene the evangelist now supplied. The ravages of evil in the boy portrayed the leprosy of sin; whilst the place of the vanished messenger was filled by the father.

What he makes shine out so plainly in that father's conduct is his great love for his son. It is in love, earnest deep, and true, that sinners are to be dealt with by those who are fellow-workers with Jesus; love like that which showed itself in the father when, knowing how ignorant he was, and unable of himself to give release to the lad, he cried so touchingly for help to Jesus, praying Him as the Teacher, to look upon his son.

*Pitying.* There is something very touching in the cry of that father pleading for his child. The thrill that runs through it is the Christ-like pity which filled his heart, and found vent in the great tenderness and yearning which still seem to pour from the words which he uttered as he told the great Physician about his only child. It was from that great pity that the three, who had been with Jesus as he prayed on the mount, learned how they were to be workers together with Him Who was wounded for their sins and

bruised for their iniquities; Whom they had seen, as the Advocate with the Father, pleading for sinners and receiving the glorious answer to His prayer. That pity would show itself in their telling the Saviour the state of those under their care, that He might pray for them too, and receive from the Father the forgiveness of their sins. Full of pity, they would have to plead; and, taught by their Master the answer to their prayer, would have to crown that pity with its perfect fruit by bearing the answer back with love to those for whom they prayed.

*Cherishing.* Foul was the case which that father laid before Jesus. Evil in all its loathsomeness had laid hold of the boy; but it had not chilled the father's heart. There was no estrangement; no disgust: only a deep pity; and a great longing to have his son released and cleansed, to have liberty given to the captive, and his son, clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness, restored to the glorious freedom of the sons of God. Plain token as the great pity of the father was of the love unfeigned in which fellow-workers with the Saviour of men had to work, this other token was equally plain, equally beautiful: the father cherishing his fallen son; letting nothing separate him from his child; but with yearning heart seeking to have him once more wholly at one with himself, purehearted as before.

The pity, the yearning, and the love which servants of Christ need for this work of His, come from the heart of Jesus Himself, Whose deep sympathy drew sinners so trustfully to Him. Those who would welcome properly in His name must have the heart of Jesus. Where that dwells, there is no coldness towards those who are timidly seeking to return; no turning away in disgust from the fallen; but a yearning deep and strong as that of the father for his only child.

ix. 40, 41. *By the word of truth.* According to the prophecy of Is. 2:3, when the many nations who would go up to

the mountain of the Lord had been received by Him, they would expect Him to make His way known to them; and it was with the supplying of that second need of theirs that the second part of the scene, now set before Theophilus, dealt. The great multitude that had met Jesus, when He came down from the mountain, represented those many nations. He had come from the midst of the cloud, from the presence of God Himself; and was standing there before them as the Prophet through Whom God would make His way known to them by "proclaiming recovering of sight to the blind," and enabling them to see and know that way. This part of His mission Jesus fulfilled by teaching people about the kingdom of God; and the rebuke which He now administered to His other pupils for their failure was a lesson to the three at His side about the way of doing that work.

Teaching people about the kingdom of God is not done by merely telling them what members of that kingdom ought to be and do; nor even by making it so plain to them that they are able to know and understand clearly what the will of God about His kingdom is. Those who teach people for Christ have to drive their teaching home so skilfully and well that it is fixed firmly in their hearers' minds: and, what is more, they have to get them to accept that teaching; to make it their rule of life; and stedfastly strive to follow it. It takes a good and powerful teacher to do that: one who knows what means to use and how to use them; one who has the power of influencing people for good. It was to assure Theophilus about his training for this, that the evangelist pointed out to him the kind of instruction the three received about the second great essential for becoming a teacher for Christ.

In the scene which followed the cleansing of the leper, great multitudes came together "to hear"; and there was no one to tell them what Jesus wanted them told. It was plain enough that men of the type of the vanished messenger

were unfit for the work ; but there was nothing in the scene to show Theophilus what makes a man unfit for it, or what he ought to be and do in order to teach people as Jesus wants them taught. He was shown it now in the second part of the object lesson which Jesus gave to the three as they stood by His side with the multitude expectant before them.

Their lesson this time was not drawn from the father, but from their fellow-Helpers to whom had been given power and authority over all devils ; and Theophilus was put in touch with it by being told the character in which those fellow-Helpers of the three were appearing in the scene. They were there as pupils who were being taken to task by their teacher. Those who work together with Christ in teaching people about the kingdom of God do it by coming to Him and learning what to teach, and then going forth to teach it ; trusting to Him to correct all their mistakes. From Him Who is the Truth of God, they learn the word of truth ; and by that word of truth they train people to walk in the wisdom of the just, in the way in which God has decreed that people shall live in His kingdom.

It is possible to have heard the Truth Himself and yet not be able to get people to follow His word ; it is possible to have been taught clearly what the people ought to be and do, and yet not to be able to lead them aright. The failure of their fellow-Helpers taught the three that. "I besought Thy pupils to cast it out ; and they could not" : besought them as he now besought their Teacher ; but they could not fill their Teacher's place. He had taught them how their work for Him was to be done ; but when the time for doing it came, they could not do it. His word in their mouth had become of no effect. They had lost the power to do their work for Jesus. It was the losing of that power which supplied the lesson to the three about doing the second part of

their work, and becoming good and powerful teachers of the people for Christ.

His rebuke, "O faithless and perverse race," recalls Deut. 32; where Moses, speaking to the men who were to carry on his work after he had gone and train people in the way of God, upbraided them for being a "perverse race" (v. 5), "sons in whom is no faith" (v. 20). He knew that, when they no longer saw him, they would utterly transgress, and turn aside out of the way which he had commanded them; and he tried to keep them from doing so by warning them of the awful judgment of God. But it was not by the terror of the judgment to come that the Prophet like unto Moses sought to make His pupils true to His teaching. There certainly is a note of warning in the words "How long shall I be with you, and bear with you?", but they are rather the pleading of Him upon Whom was "the chastisement of our peace," telling of His patient love, and how He was trying to make them know Him and His ways, and to be true to Him because of the pains which their failings would bring upon Him Whom they loved.

*Faithful.* The cause of the Helpers' failure lay partly in the workmen themselves, and partly in the way in which they tried to do the work; so that there are two parts in the lesson which is drawn from it.

The first part is found in the rebuke that they were a "faithless race," and the exclamation "How long shall I be with you?" They had been with Jesus learning to know Him and His ways; yet when it came to taking His place and freeing the boy from evil, as they had seen Him do, they had failed. Close as the likeness between them and their Master may have seemed as they set about doing the work, there was something lacking in them which robbed them of the power, and made the man's prayer to them vain. An untrustworthy set, they could not be depended upon in Jesus' absence to follow the example He had set

them. For them to have been able to do that work for Him they must have been the opposite of what He condemned:—His faithful pupils.

It would be the same with those who were to teach people for Jesus. They also would have to be His faithful pupils, dwelling with their Master and learning from Him in order that their lives might become modelled upon His, and that they might grow into His likeness, and into His ways. For it was only from the life of Christ that they could rightly learn what they were to teach their people to be; and from studying His words and ways that they could get the knowledge and skill required for dealing with them: it was only by being with Him that they would become able to give that which is far more powerful than words, the example of a life lived with Jesus, the sight of the laws and ways of the kingdom of God lived out in the life of the teacher.

It is this dwelling with Christ as faithful pupils with their Master, having their hearts and lives in harmony with His, their minds filled with Him, their very manner proclaiming their companionship with Him, that is the secret of the source of power of teachers of righteousness. It has to go on unceasingly. The comparison between the Helpers' work in the lesson and that of a teacher of righteousness shows that. The casting out of the evil spirit was a single act, quickly done; and yet it called for a longer dwelling with Christ than even those Helpers had had. The work of keeping people from evil by training them in the way of righteousness is a very long, slow task; line upon line, precept upon precept: and the Christlike example, which influences so mightily, is a life-long example. It is not one short prayer that will suffice to prepare the teacher for this work, but an unceasing dwelling with Christ. "How long shall I be with you?" Teachers of righteousness need Him with them always.

*True.* The second part of the lesson is found in the re-

buke that they were a "perverse race"; and in the warning, "How long shall I bear with you?"

The word translated "perverse" means "crooked, gone askew." As pupils of Christ, they had neither learned correctly what He had taught them, nor kept the rules that He had given them. They were not true to their Master; and therefore they failed. And the plain lesson to the three was that a like behaviour would also ruin the work of those who were to teach the people for Jesus. To be fellow-workers with Him in the word of truth, there would have to be no crookedness at all in them when dealing with that word; not the slightest change made in what He gave them to teach; no adapting of the word of truth to suit the changing ages, no modifying of it to suit the demand of men; no picking and choosing to suit themselves. They had to be true in handling the word of truth, and teach in its unchanged fulness what Jesus committed to them. Such strictness was not simply to guard against the chaos which would follow if each became a law to himself; but to make sure that it would really be the wisdom of the just into which the obedient would be turned, and that the state of things in the kingdom of God was what God himself wanted it to be.

ix. 41-43. *By the power of God.* When we look at the third part of the scene to see who were appearing in it, we find there the same multitude, but now representing the many nations of Is. 2:3 in their next stage, that of having made the great resolve, "We will walk in His way," and being in need of help to carry it out. Jesus was still there, but in the third of the characters which He filled as the Prophet; that of the Fountain of life, the Source of healing and strength for all who were unable to walk the perfect way. His three pupils were also there, learning how to serve in the household of God. There, too, was the father, once more furnishing the lesson for them; and before them, the boy, representing one of the very worst cases of its



kind with which they would have to deal:—that of a person who had lost all power to resist evil, and lay helpless, the prey of an unclean spirit. For this third part of the scene was meant to show Theophilus how Jesus taught His pupils to do the third part of His work as the Prophet, and get for their people the healing which He gave at Bethsaida to all who had need of care. Only the leading features, however, of that training were set before him; just enough to assure him of the correctness of the way in which he himself had been taught to do that work.

Once before when Theophilus had been shown a scene in which great multitudes came to be healed of their infirmities, there was no one to lead them to the Source of healing and strength. Now the father bringing his son to Jesus filled the place of that vanished messenger; and the healing which the son received showed what it was that Jesus had then wanted done.

It was by no human power that infirmities were to be healed, evil influences overcome, and people enabled to live as God wanted His people to live. The power by which that work was to be done was the power of God. About that Theophilus had already been informed when he was shown Jesus healing a like case in the synagogue at Capernaum. What he was now being assured of was, how Spokesmen of Christ could become able to use that divine power and heal the infirmities of His people.

As with the rest of their work, it would be done by their being workers together with Christ. The share allotted to them would be as usual very small; simply to obey the command given to the father, "Bring hither thy son."

There were many others amongst that multitude who would doubtless have lent a helping hand had Jesus wanted them to do so; but the command was to the father alone. His place it was to provide for the needs of his helpless child; so it was to him, and therefore to those whom he represented, that the command was given: and it was from

what took place when he obeyed the command that the three learned briefly how this work of healing was to be done.

*Bringing to Jesus.* Full as the account is, compared with the descriptions of the other parts of the scene, the things set before Theophilus were very few: merely the command to the father; the father believing, obeying, and trusting his son to Jesus; the help which Jesus gave the boy on the way; and Jesus healing the boy, and giving him back to his father.

A fuller description of the father bringing his son to Jesus would have been no help; for the way in which such people were brought to Jesus in the days when Theophilus was being trained, and ever since, was by prayer. Not a cold, formal petition, but a fervent pleading as of a father for his son; the outpouring of a heart wrung by the needs of the afflicted, as the heart of a father would be for the needs of his only child.

There was no need for the evangelist to tell Theophilus in so many words the leading part which faith was meant to have in such prayers. By making the father bring the boy, instead of going Himself to heal the child, Jesus had made that very plain. The three could see it as he began to lead his son Christ-ward; and they could see it more plainly still when his efforts seemed to fail, and the boy fell helpless on the way. The faith in which he started kept strong to the end: an unwavering faith that with Jesus there was a power greater than the awful power which at times took possession of his son; and that, once with Jesus, all would be well with the lad.

Although the sight which they saw taught the three that they could become fellow-workers with Christ, and, by the power of God, heal the infirmities of the weak by bringing them to Him with that father's faith; it also taught them that there was a limit to the use of that power. No one can be healed against his own will. The person afflicted has to want to be healed; has to be willing to come. The

great multitudes in the account of the cleansed leper had shown, by their coming to Jesus to be healed, that they had that essential, the desire to be healed; and that same desire and willingness to be healed was in the boy; for the evangelist described him to Theophilus not as being brought, but as coming.

Another point there was about which Theophilus had to be assured; something which, in the case of need, had to be done for those afflicted with infirmities. The very nature of their affliction made it necessary. The boy had to be helped to come to Jesus. He set out, but collapsed on the way. The old evil influence began to work on him again, and he had not strength to resist it; had not strength enough to go on his way to Jesus. To quote the expression used, it was pulling him all to pieces. There he lay writhing helplessly; unable even to come and be healed, until Jesus helped him by rebuking the unclean spirit. It taught those whom He was training to work for Him, that they too would have to be ready to help the weak to come and receive the strength which they so badly needed. In whatever way the help would be given, like the rest of their work for Jesus, their share in it would be very small: indeed, judging from the form in which the lesson was given, it would be so small, that practically it would be their Fellow-worker Who was doing it all.

Jesus healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. The aim of the work for which the three were now being trained was "to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him," fit to be with Him for ever in heaven; and the sight of that father taking the boy to his heart, and rejoicing over what was more to him than all the treasures of earth, his son safe and well, not only taught them how great would be the joy on earth of those shepherds whose hearts were in their work, but also made them understand how great their bliss in heaven would be when they met there the weaklings of their flocks safe for ever in Christ.

*Reverent.* It would have been of very little use for the evangelist to have described how the man approached Jesus; for it was to Jesus of Nazareth in His humility that he had brought the lad, and the way in which people behaved to Jesus when He was upon the earth was not the way in which His followers were afterwards to draw near Him. So he assured Theophilus about the rest of this part of his instruction by telling him that "they were all astounded at the majesty of God." The word which he used for majesty is the same as that in Jer. 40:9 (Sep. Ver.), where God declared that the great things He would do in restoring His people would be for joy, and praise, and majesty.

There was something about Jesus as He did that work of mercy, which made everyone feel that God was manifesting Himself in Him. When on Sinai He had revealed His glory as "The Lord God pitiful and merciful," it was to Moses, when he was upon the mount, away from every one; but it was in the Prophet like unto Moses, and when He had come down from the mount, and was standing there with all beholding, that He revealed His majesty in that deed of mercy: showing that all who afterwards approached Jesus of Nazareth would have to draw near to Him as to One in Whom is the majesty of God. Reverently, as in the presence of the majesty of God, the three, and those whom they represented, were to enter the presence of Christ when they sought to do as the father had done for his son, and get healing for the infirmities of their people.

#### b. 5.

#### COMPANIONS OF THE SUFFERING SERVANT

*Beginning.* v. 16. He withdrew Himself in the deserts, and prayed.

*Continuation.* ix. 43-56. Christ correcting His pupils.

This section completes the series of lessons by means of which the evangelist outlined the general course of training which Jesus gave men whom He chose for the spokesman-

ship. The series began at the Transfiguration. Those to whom these sample lessons were being given were Peter, John, and James. At times others were also present; but it was upon them and their training that the eyes of Theophilus were fixed throughout. On the mount, they had been taught to know the Master Whom they were to serve; coming down from the mount, they learned how His work was to be done; and now, they were being taught how they were to behave as His Spokesmen. The order in which they have taken a leading part in this series of lessons is the order in which their names were mentioned at the outset.

This last part of their training had to do with their behaviour as Spokesmen of Christ. Christ's work has to be done in Christ's way. Those who speak in His name have to bear themselves as He bore Himself when on earth. He received not glory from men, neither must they. Giving heed to the praise of men makes Spokesmen of Christ go astray from His way. It even made Elijah go astray: the prophet in whose spirit and power John the Baptist, the type of the Spokesmen, went before the face of the Lord. That fierce outburst on Mount Carmel, when he slew the prophets of Baal and gave them no time for repentance, was not the behaviour of a spokesman of God. It was the fruit of the temptation to which he listened as he stood triumphant above the prostrate people. In its train came fear; and to save his life, the shepherd forsook his sheep. The right behaviour for a prophet of God was seen in him on Mount Horeb, when he learned that he was to speak for God, not as represented by the mighty wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but by "the voice of a gentle breeze"; and, wrapping his face in his mantle, he stood before God in deep humility, meekly listening to the gentle Voice whose spokesman he had been chosen to be.

When it was possible for a man like Elijah to go so badly astray, it is not surprising that the closing instruction about the spokesmanship should guard against failures,

and deal with the way in which Spokesmen of Christ were to behave in their official capacity. The lesson had begun when He withdrew Himself in the deserts, and prayed. No trace of His messenger was to be seen; no sign of any work; only Jesus praying. It was a picture of Is. 53:6, where the suffering Servant was made the scapegoat for the speakers. There was nothing to show how those speakers had gone astray; but it was made clear that somehow or other their work was so bound up with the suffering Servant, that he was held responsible for what they had done; and the Lord gave him up for their sins. This section supplied what was lacking in that account by showing Theophilus how Spokesmen of Christ go astray in their way; and how they should behave when walking in the way of Christ.

What would be likely to draw them astray was the praise of men; a temptation which unceasingly besets their office and its work. As the evangelist pointed out, there is no escape from it. In the sketch which he made, all the people were marvelling. They were marvelling at all the things Jesus was doing: at His welcome of sinners, His wonderful teaching about the kingdom of God, and His astounding change of weak and faulty mortals into people fit for that kingdom; and they were marvelling also at the bands of men He was forming to help Him in that work. When Spokesmen of Christ find people extolling their office and their work, and have such praises fill their ears, their safeguard is to do as Jesus told them then, and associate those words of praise with the betrayal of the Son of man, the reward which He received on earth.

Three reasons were given why His hearers were unable to make use of that safeguard; reasons which accounted for their conduct on the three occasions recorded in the section.

1. They understood not this saying.

2. It was concealed from them that they should not perceive it.

3. They were afraid to ask Him about it.

The three lessons upon the behaviour of Spokesmen, which the evangelist selected for Theophilus, were drawn from occasions when some of those whom Jesus was training had let the praise of men lead them astray. On the first two occasions it was people's admiration for work connected with the orders of Spokesmen and Helpers; on the third it was their own admiration for Jesus. The substance of the lessons was, that for Spokesmen of Christ to walk worthily of their calling, they must have the mind of Christ; and bear themselves towards one another, and those amongst whom they labour, with the humility, meekness, and long-suffering which companions of the suffering Servant should have. These three rules for their behaviour are taken in order, each dealing with one of the three parts of the work of the Christ taken in their order; but they all apply to the doing of every part of His work.

ix. 46-48. *Lowly.* (The little child.) "They understood not this saying." The two parts of the saying about popular praise and the betrayal were plain enough, but they could not see the connection between them; nor could they understand how listening to men extolling the work of Christ could have anything to do with their going astray, and finding themselves amongst those guilty speakers for whose sins the Lord gave Him up. The fruit of their ignorance was the dispute which arose among them as to which should be the greater.

Because no mention is made of their being told that they were to be trained for the office of Spokesman, it must not be assumed that those men did not know that they were undergoing training, or that they had no idea of what it was for which they were being trained. They may indeed have been far from having a full knowledge of the work which a Spokesman of Christ would have to do, or a clear

understanding of the course of training which they were undergoing; but it may safely be taken for granted that they knew that they were being trained to give that welcome, instruction, and healing which they had seen Jesus give when He took them away privately with Himself to Bethsaida.

Seeing that those three parts of their work have been taken in the same order all through the chapter, this part of the section has to do with the work of welcoming; and the dispute which arose among them as to which should be the greater, would have been about which should pronounce Christ's words of welcome, and by thus acting as His representative, fill the place of honour in the eyes of the people. It was this dispute which gave Jesus the opportunity of teaching them to walk worthily of their calling as His Welcomers of the people. In setting them right, He did not deal with their words and deeds, but with the "reasoning of their heart"; and corrected that mainspring of conduct by teaching them humility.

*Humble.* It was another of those wonderful object lessons: a little child by Jesus' side; so humble, so small, hiding nothing of the Saviour; keeping close to Him Who had taken and put him there; waiting, with face uplifted, to hear what Jesus wanted him to do. And as those companions of Jesus looked, all grounds for pride, all claims to greatness as His representatives must have faded away; for the position about which they had been contending could have been filled by that little child devoid of everything upon which they had been priding themselves; with nothing whatever to distinguish him even as a child, but the fact that he was by Jesus' side, taken and set there by Jesus Himself. Those who received that little child, coming in the name of Christ, would receive Christ Himself; like as those who receive the Son, Who came in such humility, speaking what He had heard from the Father, receive the Father Who sent Him.



The lesson from that scene was plainly that the representative of Christ, who bears from the great Physician soul's medicine to the sick and His words of encouragement to accept His welcome, has to be very humble; knowing that his share in that glorious work is no greater than that of that little child: and it is clear that what Theophilus had been taught was, that a Spokesman of Christ had to lay aside all idea of his own importance, all thoughts of his own greatness, lay aside everything and become as that little child; his place by Jesus' side; his work to listen to what the Master said, so as to know what message he should bear; counting himself to be nothing more than the messenger, the mouthpiece of Jesus.

*Sinking self.* The next remark of Jesus taught them about their behaviour towards the people whom they would have to welcome in His name: for the view-point still lies between the Saviour and the people; and the bearing of the Spokesmen is being considered, first as regards the Lord, and then as regards the people.

The attitude of the Spokesmen of Christ towards the people whom He welcomes through them is the fruit of the humility which they are to have towards their Lord. That humility shows itself in the complete sinking of self; so that the servant of Christ, close as he is to his Lord and faithful in his service of Him, yet counts himself no better than the fallen one who has just been forgiven, whom his Master has welcomed through him.

The lesson which taught this was drawn from themselves. There in their company were men who had failed in their duty. Certainly they were now with their Saviour again; but they had been condemned by Him as a faithless and perverse set: how were those who had been true to Him all the time, and had been specially honoured by being with Him on the mount, to treat such worthless ones? And His answer to those whom He was training to welcome sinners for Him was, that he who was least amongst

all that company, he who felt his own short-comings so keenly that he regarded himself as being less worthy than even his once fallen companions, that man was truly great.

It was thus that the evangelist set the seal of Jesus upon the instructions which Theophilus had received about the bearing of a Spokesman towards the penitent whom he was welcoming in Jesus' name.

ix. 49, 50. *Meck.* (Forbidding the casting-out of devils.). John evidently did not see how they could put that self-effacement into practice, and still be true to the position in which Jesus Himself had placed them; for he brought forward a case in which regard for the decree of Christ had forced them to assert themselves, and actually to stop a man from working for Him. The account is short; but it was enough to show Theophilus what had hidden the saying of Jesus from them that they should not perceive it, and also to furnish him with the key to the instruction which He gave His pupils about their behaviour as doers of the second part of His work with the multitude; that of teaching them the laws and ways of the kingdom of God.

They failed to see that by what they had done they had been helping to deliver the Son of man into the hands of men. Something was blinding their eyes, and concealing it from them, as it had concealed from them that saying of Jesus: something which had made them go astray, and yet be so sure that they were in the right, that they had ruthlessly enforced their views, and stopped the work which Jesus wanted done. What had thus warped their judgment, and given them that over-weening confidence in their own views about the way in which the kingdom of God should be carried on, was pride of office; the high regard they had for themselves as holders of the office of Helper.

When they became Teachers, that same kind of temptation would beset them; the same pride of office, arising from the praise of men, would be there to blind them; the same self-esteem to make them enforce their own views of

the will of God, and, by stopping the work of His servants, be found to fight against God. Against that self-conceit and self-assertion Jesus now guarded them by His unqualified condemnation of what they had done. What the behaviour of those who learn and teach God's laws has to be, is given in Ps. 24: 9 (Sep. Ver.), "The meek will He guide in judgment; the meek will He teach His ways"; and the behaviour of interpreters of those laws, both in teaching and enforcing them, has to be marked by meekness.

*Hindering none.* The law of the kingdom of God which gave rise to the incident was one which had to do with the order of Helpers. Jesus Himself had founded the order, and had entrusted it with a certain share of His work. By the Lord's decree it was established; and whatever He decreed about it was henceforth one of the laws of the kingdom of God. Now one part of their commission gave them authority over all devils: and their inference was, that no one else was to interfere in any way whatever. The man, who was casting out devils in Jesus' name, did not belong to the order: so they forbade him; heedless of the miserable beings left unrelieved, blind to the fact that they were proving false to the Master Who had sent them.

The answer of Jesus was, "Forbid not." This did not mean that, the man and themselves being all workers, there was no difference between them; and that it would be all the same whether they joined with the man, or with their fellow-Helpers: neither did it mean that they were setting too great a value upon their Ordination: for it was by means of the Ordinations which He was instituting that Jesus was laying the foundation of the kingdom of God; thereby making them essential for the upbuilding and upholding of it as He wanted it to be.

As a matter of fact, although casting out devils formed part of the work of Helpers, and also of Spokesmen, it was not confined to those orders. The power was exercised by others also; for Jews, who were not Christians, used to cast

them out. What the man was doing formed part of that war with evil which all Christians, ordained and unordained, have to wage; and the question of orders did not come in. John and his fellow-Helpers, however, thought that it did: and evidently argued that all casting out of evils was included in the commission which gave them power and authority over them; and for any one not so ordained to cast them out was to trespass on the rights of their order, and go contrary to the will of Jesus. Hence their forbidding.

The answer of Jesus taught them something which, as His Teachers, they would have to know: that they were wrong in interpreting a law in such a way as to clash with the purposes for which it had been made; and that they were also wrong in the way in which they had enforced their interpretation: for they had shown a ruthlessness which ought to have no place in the hearts of those who are companions of the meek and lowly Saviour of men.

*Welcoming aid.* The men whose training the evangelist was showing Theophilus, were liable at any time to fail as grievously in carrying out their Master's will as their comrades had failed in casting the devil out of the man's son; and yet so blindly satisfied were they with themselves, that they had rejected the aid which they might have had. Jesus' answer took it for granted that they needed help; and pointed out those upon whom they could count as their assistants in doing His work. "He that is not against you is for you." It was in the ready welcome of aid, a thing so galling to pride, that the meekness which they were to have as Teachers, would show itself. As servants of Christ whose hearts were set upon their Master's work, and who knew their own unfitness to do it properly, they were meekly to welcome all the help that they could get.

ix. 51-56. *Long-suffering.* (The unfriendly Samaritans). "They were afraid to ask Him about this saying." On all sides they heard voices rising in honour of their Master, and the sound of that praise was pleasant to hear; for the hon-

ouring of their Lord brought honour to them His chosen band. They knew enough of the world to know that His being given up into the hands of men would be the end of all the praise and glory in which, as His Spokesmen, they hoped to share; and so much did they dread the loss of the praise of men, that they were afraid to know anything more of that giving up of which He had spoken. The same motives, that kept them silent then, were working in them on the occasion which the evangelist chose for completing his sketch of the training which had to do with the third part of the work which Jesus was sent to do: the healing of people's infirmities.

A few abrupt sentences, tacked together by the usual "ands," put Theophilus in touch with the lesson. "The days were well-nigh come that He should be received up" reminded him of the third part of the Spokesmen's work, to make ready a people prepared for Him when He shall come again; whilst "He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" showed him in what character Jesus was appearing in the lesson. For the latter statement not only meant that Jesus was knowingly and openly going to the scene of His humiliation and suffering; but also that in His bearing He showed plainly the forsakenness of One Whom the Lord was giving up for their sins. They had closed their eyes to it before; but now it was too plain to be overlooked: and, in spite of themselves, they saw Him in the character in which they were to serve Him; the suffering Servant, full of resignation and humility; the Son of man about to be given up into the hands of men, patiently bowing to the Father's will.

The lesson began with the messengers whom Jesus sent before His face, as they themselves would be sent. Their mission was a failure; for the Samaritans, where they went to make ready for the Lord, would not receive Him, "because His face was going to Jerusalem."

That was the way of the Samaritans, Josephus tells us.

When the Jews were in prosperity, they would make out that they too were Jews, and would claim to share with them; but as soon as the influence of the Jews began to fail, and they began to be looked down upon, then the Samaritans would have nothing to do with them. And a cloud was settling down upon the career of Jesus of Nazareth. His followers had begun to fall away from Him, and He Himself was going to Jerusalem, right into the hands of His foes: so the Samaritans, unable to break away from their old habit, would not receive Him.

Then followed a practical lesson upon dealing with people who will persist in clinging to their infirmities instead of allowing themselves to be prepared for the coming of the Lord. James and John, two of the men whom Jesus was training to heal infirmities, wanted to sweep those Samaritans away altogether. There was doubtlessly zeal for the dignity of their Leader in their request, and they were but claiming the promise made in Deut. 18:19 that God would take vengeance on those who would not hear the Prophet whom He would raise up; but zeal for their Lord's dignity was strongly coloured with zeal for their own. They saw the Lord, Whom they were following entering the valley of humiliation; and they were afraid lest they also would have to enter and share with Him. Their selfish fear re-opened the floodgates of the old nature, which showed its presence by the same kind of behaviour as that of Elijah when, forgetting "the voice of the gentle breeze" for which he was to speak, he called down fire from heaven upon people in order to uphold his dignity as a man of God. So James and John, to uphold the dignity of their Lord and His company, asked if it were His will that they should call down fire from heaven upon those Samaritans.

*Self-controlled.* "He turned and rebuked them"; for they had gone astray in their way, and had committed one of those sins for the sake of which He was even then going up to Jerusalem. Such lack of self-control was no mark of a

follower of Christ; nor was their fierce hastiness a mark of one who was serving Him. He Himself was very long-suffering towards those who would not receive Him and the great gifts that He brought them; very forbearing with them in their waywardness and their obstinacy: and the way in which Jesus dealt with people was to be the way of those who acted for Him.

That rebuke established the instruction given to Theophilus about his bearing towards those who were unwilling to receive the messengers of Christ, and be healed of their infirmities. The work of the servant of Christ is to heal, not to harm; to make ready for the Lord by preparing people, and not by destroying them. He has to be very forbearing; his temper never ruffled, his patience never worn out, no matter how obstinately they cling to their infirmities, how deaf they are to the counsel given; no matter how cross-grained their manner, and insulting their rejection of the help which is offered them. Striving to be a true follower of the suffering Servant, he is ever watching to keep down the old human nature, which is so ready to have done with the weakly when they refuse to be strengthened and changed: ever toiling on with untiring patience, hoping against hope, to heal their infirmities.

*Patient.* The remarkable change from the fierce longing of James and John to the quiet departure to another village, showed plainly how long-suffering was to be put into practice by Spokesmen of Jesus when dealing with people who shut their hearts against them when they came to try and make them ready for the coming of the Lord. There was no word of rebuke for those Samaritans, no chiding, no casting off; but gently and quietly the Saviour went His way to a village that would receive Him; patiently biding His time till their hearts should be won for a dwelling-place for Him: and with Him went those who were His companions.

That same patience, in all its many forms, was the way

in which His messengers were to deal with people who were unwilling to receive the Lord of life, and be healed.

c.

ix. 57-62. *Following Christ.* When the evangelist told Theophilus what men had to do who resolved to come after Christ he gave him nothing but the bare rule, and the three sayings that went with it. Certainly he was equally brief in the other parts of the chapter; but the things which Theophilus had been told that he would have to do in carrying out that rule were evidently of such a nature, that he had to be specially assured about them by being shown that they were really what Jesus Himself had required of men. So the evangelist made the rule the subject of his closing illustrations; taking as his text, "Following Christ."

The following of which he speaks, forms the crown of the rule for those who "come after" Christ. It stands upon the other two parts, denying self, and taking up the cross daily; and is so closely bound up with them, that, in illustrating it, he has been able to bring them in as well. The examples, which he has given, touch upon the three parts of the work of the Christ in the same order in which they have been taken throughout the chapter.

The rule, as we have seen, goes very far; even to the deliberate self-sacrifice of the man's life. This sacrifice may take the form of a swift martyrdom, or of a slow wearing away of life in toil and hardship for the sake of Christ; it may take a form which draws the gaze of the multitude, or it may be enshrined in a quiet, lowly life, unnoticed by men, spent in the Master's service. That form of self-sacrifice which has taken to itself the name of martyrdom, is the exception. The usual form is the lingering death, the wearing out of a life in the service of Christ. There is the same self-devotion; but it is amidst the quiet scenes of everyday life, and not in the wild excitement of persecution. Its outward sign is the giving up of things with which



the life of man is so closely entwined that they may be said to form part of it; and the illustrations which the evangelist has given in connection with it, are all drawn from things that belong to the private life of man, that belong to an earthly home. Each case must be taken, as usual, to include all the lesser sacrifices of the same kind that a man may be called upon to make for the sake of his work as a Spokesman of Christ.

It was "as they went in the way" (that is, as Jesus and those Helpers who had resolved to come after Him, and were willing to conform to His rule and deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Him, went in the way), that He taught them what that rule would mean to a man who became His Spokesman.

They learned about the first part of it when a certain man declared his intention to keep the last part by following Jesus whithersoever He went. The rule cannot be dismembered. A man cannot undertake the last part of it and follow Christ, without also undertaking the first part of it, and denying himself. He has to be free to go anywhere and everywhere for his Master, the Good Shepherd, and have nothing to hinder him in making untiring search for lost sheep; nothing to hamper him in his efforts to gather in those whom Jesus would welcome. Neither care for life nor for the comforts of life, is to stand in the way of the work of a Spokesman of Christ. For Jesus' answer was, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." The man who follows Him must also count on having no home. If his work for Christ requires it, the Spokesman has to give up every possession, every comfort of life, and become a houseless wanderer; for he has promised to deny himself.

Next came the daily taking up of their cross. Whatever it was that the bearing of that cross was to mean to them, it was never to become an empty form. Day after day they

would have to renew their acceptance of it; and day by day carry out all that was meant by it. It is only right and proper for people, who have to take a vow of obedience, to insist upon knowing definitely what new obligations they will be taking upon themselves; and also how these new obligations will agree with those they already feel bound to fulfil: and it was only right and proper that such people as Theophilus should also demand to know that the things required of them as duties were really those which Jesus intended the taking up of the cross to mean. The evangelist has therefore met this demand by setting before him a case in which Jesus showed those whom He was training to what they were binding themselves when they took up their cross.

They heard Him order a man to follow Him. It was not the man who had not yet learned to deny himself to whom the command was given (for that man was plainly unfit to take even the next step, much less to follow Christ), but another man; one who was able to keep the first part of the rule. He owned Jesus as his Lord, and was willing to obey Him; but his obedience was not the obedience which the Lord requires of one who has taken up the cross and become His man. He begged leave to go and bury his father first. Then those with Jesus learned that a cross-bearer had to be free from all earthly bonds; that no earthly duty, not even that which was held so sacred as the last honouring of dead parents, was to have any claim upon him, or clash with his duty to his Lord. Jesus treated the man as belonging wholly to Himself. His duty as a cross-bearer was to be with his Lord, to hear, and to obey; and the Lord's command was, that, regardless of all else, even of his duty as a son, the man was to go as His messenger and tell people about the kingdom of God. It was the second part of the Spokesmen's work; but the lesson applies to every branch of it. What the Master gives His followers to do comes before everything else. Untrammelled they devote themselves to it.

Their whole duty is to Him Whose badge they bear. His will is paramount. They belong to their Lord.

But even when a man has been able to yield unhesitating obedience to Jesus as his Lord, the battle is not over. There is more human nature still to be dealt with. There is the heart-yearning for those whom he has left behind. But Jesus requires an undivided service from every one who becomes His Spokesman. He not only demands the giving up of earthly comforts, and the disregarding of all other claims to allegiance, but He demands the very heart of the man, the sacrifice of its dearest affections. "Another also said, I will follow Thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house." This man was able to satisfy the first two parts of the rule; for he was ready to undergo privations, and he also owned Jesus as his Lord: but his heart turned back to the broken circle, to those whom he was leaving behind. It was but natural; and yet the man was condemned: for by that looking back he showed that there was something in him which made him unfit for service in the kingdom of God; unfit for coming after Christ in His work of healing the infirmities of His people. Nothing is to come between the Spokesman and his work for Christ, or hinder his perfect service. His whole life belongs to Christ. Stedfast, unfaltering, unswerving in his course, not even the pleadings of home to the human heart are to interfere with his Christ-given work of making ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him when He shall come again to lead them to their eternal home in heaven.

## CHAPTER H.

ST. LUKE X. 1.—XI. 13.

(a). x. 1. (b). x. 2-42. (c). xi. 1-13.

(a).

x. 1. Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others. And he sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come.

(b). 1.

2. And he said unto them, The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest.

2.

3-20. Go your ways.

Behold, I send you forth as lambs in midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes: and salute no man on the way. And into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall turn to you again. And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye shall enter, and they receive you not, go out into the streets thereof and say, Even the dust from your city, that cleaveth to our feet, we do wipe off against you: howbeit know this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh. I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works

had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sack cloth and ashes. Howbeit it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt be brought down unto Hades. He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me.

And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you. Howbeit in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

## 3.

21-24. In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father; for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.

And turning to the disciples, he said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see; for I say unto you, that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not.

## 4.

25-37. And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbour unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

## 5.

38-42. Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

## (c). 1.

xi. 1-4. And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation.

## 2.

5-13. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are

with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee? I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needeth.

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

And of which of you that is a father shall his son ask a loaf, and he give him a stone? or a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? Or, if he shall ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

## CHAPTER H. X. 1.—XI. 13.

### WELCOMERS

a. x. 1. b. x. 2-42. c. xi. 1-13.

*Beginning of Training.* v. 17-26. The forgiveness of the sick of the palsy.

*General Training.* Chap. G. The first subdivision of the first part of each section.

a.

x. 1. *Introduction.* For Theophilus to be assured about the lowest order of the ministry, he had to be supplied with an outline, not only of the preparation which Jesus had given them, but of their Ordination as well; and to be assured about the next order, he had likewise to be shown that the further preparation of men belonging to the lowest order was followed by another Ordination before they were allowed to do the work of the second order. This work was the second of the three parts of what Jesus had been given to do, and the first of the two which He was sent to do. It consisted of proclaiming release to captives, recovering sight to the blind, and setting the bruised at liberty; and the Ordination was to enable them to follow in His steps, and carry on that work as He had done it when He welcomed, taught, and healed the people.

"After these things the Lord appointed others, seventy in number." The title of "the Lord," which the evangelist gave Him, notified Theophilus that whatever took place was done by Jesus as the Head of His household, the Church; as the only One Who had any right to regulate the affairs of that



household; the only One Who could say what should be done, and who should do it; the sole Source of all authority and power. The certainty about the second order of the ministry rested upon the fact, that it too was created and established by Jesus. The Master had decided to put some of His servants to a new use; and after having selected men from amongst them, He founded the order of Spokesmen by ordaining seventy; just as He had founded the order of Helpers by ordaining twelve after He had selected and trained them for that office.

As no details of this Ordination are given, its leading features would have been the same as those of the Ordination of the Helpers. Their full Ordination, as we have seen, contained elements corresponding to the night of prayer upon the mountain; the calling of the pupils to the place of prayer; the choosing of the men; their endowment with power and authority; their commission to preach the kingdom of God and "to heal": and as these were all of them points about which Theophilus had to be assured, it is evident that they all represented essential features of that Ordination. In like manner, in the Spokesmen's Ordination there would also have been the call in the place of prayer, and receipt of their commission from Jesus with the power and authority needed for the work entrusted to them.

Their being spoken of as "others" does not mean that the twelve were not of the number, or that members of the order of Helpers were not admitted to this new order: for the first of the qualifications for it was that the candidates should be approved Helpers; and it was the training of the twelve themselves that furnished Theophilus with an example of the way in which men were to be prepared for it. The use of the word was to point out that it was a new and distinct order that was being founded; one whose members formed a different class from the members of the old order of Helpers.

It is needless to say that the number of members in this

new order, the order of Spokesmen, was not limited to seventy; any more than the number of Helpers was limited to twelve. Those numbers were the birth-marks of the orders, so to speak. To whatever size they might afterwards grow, their nature and functions would always be the same as those which were given them at their formation; and their place in Christ's plan would remain the same as that which the choice of those numbers showed He had assigned to them at the first. The purpose of the numbers was to stamp upon those orders for ever their position and their duties; and the number seventy, like the rest of the numbers, did this so plainly that the evangelist had no need to say anything more about it. For it was the Prophet like unto Moses selecting a band of men to help Him, as Moses had done when he chose the seventy to bear with him the burden that came upon him from the transgressions of the people, their ignorance, and their failings; and the duties of this new order were likewise to deal with sin, ignorance, and weaknesses, and make people worthy members of the kingdom of God. Modelled on the seventy that Moses had chosen was the Sanhedrin with its work of judging, giving forth the law, and moulding the national life; and the position which the order filled, that Jesus modelled upon them, was that of the Sanhedrin of the kingdom of God.

It was "after these things," that is, after the training described in the last chapter had been given them, that the seventy were ordained. Then came the special training for the work referred to in the rest of the introduction. There were thus two parts in their training—that which was given them before their Ordination, and that which was given them after it. Before they were ordained they received what may be called a general training; one that covered every part of their work, but did not go into things fully. The time chosen for their special training was after they had been ordained, and their office assigned them; a time when the responsibilities of an office begin to make them-

selves felt, and instruction about it comes home to a man with a new and living force. It dealt with those three parts of the work which Jesus had been sent to do. A whole chapter is devoted to the training for each part: and each chapter, besides continuing their preliminary training, develops one of the three divisions which run through chapter G, the chapter which gives the outline of their general training.

The present chapter develops the first of those three divisions; that which deals with welcoming people for Christ. Its subject matter is set forth in the words, "He sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself was about to come."

Here again we have information conveyed by means of numbers. According to Josephus, Moses ordered that judges should be appointed in every city, and that each judge should have two officers allotted to him out of the tribe of Levi. He says nothing about the duties of those officers; but most probably they would have been to prepare the cases for the judge, so that when he came, all would be ready to be laid before him; and, when his decision was given, to make it known, and see that it was carried out. Those whom the Prophet like unto Moses sent forth were to fill places like those which the pairs of officers out of the tribe of Levi filled for the different judges. In the kingdom of God, however, there is only one Judge, Jesus Himself; so that it was as assistants of Jesus that they were to act. This was to be the duty of every Spokesman, and not of a chosen few: for He divided into pairs the whole of the order which He had just created, and thus made this service a distinguishing mark of every member of it.

"Going before His face" does not simply mean going before Him. His "face" stands for the character in which He was revealing Himself, the way in which He would have Himself known, and in which they were to serve Him; and as the leading feature in this part of His work was mercy,

and the title of His choice was that of Physician of souls rather than Judge, pity for the sin-sick would mark those who went before His face. It was in keeping with this that the evangelist chose the forgiveness of the sick of the palsy as a sample of the beginning of the training of these men.

With regard to the enquiries of Theophilus into the instruction given to those who were to act as assistants to the Physician of souls, the loving Welcomer of all who come to Him, the evangelist, so far, has answered them thus. The authority by which they did their work came from Jesus of Nazareth. He received it when He was ordained and sent by God with the power of the Spirit to do that work; and He gave evidence that such authority had of a surety been given Him for use on earth, when, by healing the sick of the palsy, He taught all those doctors of the law that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

*Summary.* The first two sections, like those of the rest of the chapters of this treatise, are about the kind of men that Jesus used.

The first thing which was to distinguish men who were to act as Welcomers for Jesus was, that they were to be men of prayer; men who made God's help the main-spring of their service. The second mark was that they were to have the express command of Jesus to go for Him to His people; and, bowing to His will, were to place themselves at His disposal, ready to go forth as the seventy had done.

As for the things which they specially needed for receiving people in His name; the first was such a knowledge of the mystery of Jesus as would make them sure that being sent by Him made them messengers of God the Father, and gave their message of pardon power in heaven as well as on earth: the next was love; a love which ruled all their doings, but especially that of tending to the wounded soul: the last, that sinking of self and humble serving of Jesus

pictured by Mary, sitting at the Master's feet, hearing His word.

The chapter closes with a lesson on prayer, given as to labourers who were being cast forth into the harvest; showing Theophilus how they were to pray, first as men who were to gather the children of God to their Father; and secondly as those who had to provide for the needs of His children.

b. 1.

MEN OF PRAYER.

*Beginning.* v. 17. And it came to pass on one of those days, that He was teaching; and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every village of Galilee and Judæa and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was with Him to heal.

*General.* G. 1:1. Forward to help. (Coming to Jesus about the five thousand.)

*Special.* x. 2. The perishing grain.

The first test of fitness was the effect which the knowledge of the needs of the perishing had upon them. In His parabolic way, Jesus spoke of human beings as if they were grain that God was raising up for Himself. Several things have to be done to ripened grain before it is fit for use, but one of them is of such vital importance that it overshadows all the rest. It has to be saved. The saving of the grain is the work of the "labourers." When there are not enough to gather it in at the right time, it falls to the ground, and is lost; a fact so well known that Theophilus would have understood at once that when Jesus told them that "The harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few," He was testing them by seeing what would be the effect upon them of the knowledge that human beings were perishing for lack of men to go and rescue them.

It was not missionary work such as He had taught them to do in the country of the Gerasenes that He was wanting

done. In civilized countries "the harvest" is not understood to be wild grain, growing upon unreclaimed land; but good grain, which has been grown upon a man's own land, and belongs to him: so that in this parabolic saying it stands, not for people who do not belong to the kingdom of God, but for those who are already members of it. The Lord of the harvest wanted all to be saved; and yet most of it was in danger of being lost to Him through the lack of labourers. Souls that had found the light were perishing, because there was no one to seek and to save them.

How it is that labourers are so few was shown in the scene where the Pharisees and doctors of the law were sitting unmoved in the room where Jesus was with the power of the Lord to heal. Without were the sin-sick in their trouble and distress; within was the Saviour waiting: yet not one of those shepherds of Israel went out to bring any of them in. There they sat, cold and unfeeling, whilst those whom the Saviour was waiting to welcome perished neglected. They neither cared about sinners, nor believed in the power of Jesus to save them. They lacked the first great essential for being Welcomers for Christ: the hunger for souls, and a living faith in God's mercy through Christ.

The effect which the knowledge of this scarcity of labourers in the harvest was to have on those who had been chosen to act for the Saviour of men was, that they would pray the Lord of the harvest to cast out labourers into His harvest. What they were to pray for was, not that men should be raised up to become labourers, but that men who were already labourers should be cast out into the harvest, and not be allowed to sit, like those Pharisees and doctors of the law, and take no part in it. Saving grain, like doing any other work has to be learned. The lord of the harvest would judge when the ingathering should take place and order out the labourers to the work; but then it would be left to them to do it. At that time it was all handwork; and they would have had to know how to raise that which

was fallen, and gather it safely in; how to tend carefully grain that had been left too long, and was ready to fall; how to separate it from the weeds that entangled it, and bring it in clean. Simple as their share in the harvesting was to be, they would have needed some previous instruction about it before being trusted to go by themselves and save the grain: and such instruction for the harvest work of the Lord the seventy had had in the general training which had been given them; and their prayer was, that men like themselves should be cast out into the harvest. Whatever it might be that was keeping them from undertaking the work, they were to pray the Lord of the harvest that He would overcome it, and make them go and do what they could for Him. That prayer included themselves. Though unrecorded, the petition was there, *Move us to rescue the perishing.*

To find out what the hindrance so often is that has to be overcome we have only to turn to what Theophilus had been told about some of those same men and the needs of the five thousand. They knew and felt for their needs and were eager to help them; but their prayer to Jesus was that those people should go elsewhere to get them supplied. Even when told by Jesus to go and do the work themselves, they dared not try. They knew that, humanly speaking, it was impossible for them to do it; and they had not yet learned that Jesus could do it through them. A sign that such men have really learned to believe in the power of God through Christ to satisfy, by means of His servants, the hunger of men's souls for salvation is, that they pray that He will overcome all such backwardness and diffidence in themselves, and in spite of their frailty, use them for this work of mercy.

What is given here is but the beginning of their prayer, the head-line so to speak: for no true servant of God would pray to be cast out empty-handed to supply the needs of His people. His prayer would assuredly be that he should

be supplied with whatever was needed for doing the work aright, so that he could set forth fully equipped, and sure of success. At the root of such a prayer lies faith; faith that God uses men to gather in His harvest, to give His people the welcome of Christ.

b. 2

SENT BY CHRIST.

*Beginning.* v. 18. And behold, men bring on a bed a man that was palsied: and they sought to bring him him in, and to lay him before Him.

*General* G. 2:1. Deniers of themselves.

*Special.* x. 3-20. The sending of the seventy.

As if they were officers of a judge, the seventy had to go in pairs before the face of Jesus into every city and place whither He Himself was about to come; but it was from men carrying a palsied man to Jesus that Theophilus had learned so far about the preparation of a case for Him. It was very little, however, that that sight could have taught him about the kind of men that Jesus used as His officers. We can see that they would have known about the man, and the cause of his paralysis; and also that they had doubtlessly heard from his own lips his tale of woe, and had decided, from what they had learned, that his was a fit case to lay before Jesus: but that is about all. In silence they came on the scene; in silence they passed through it. There was something lacking in them which kept them from being used as examples of the kind of men who could speak for Jesus in a case like that. What their lack was we learn from the first part of the present section: for like all the other sections of the chapter, it consists of two parts; the first of which continues the corresponding part of the beginning of their training, whilst the second enlarges upon the corresponding part of their general training.

What they needed before they could speak for Jesus as His Welcomers is given in one word,—that command of



Jesus which is translated, "Go your ways." They had to be personally sent by Christ; commissioned by Him. That was the official part of their mark of fitness, so to speak. The rest of the section showed Theophilus what the men themselves are to be like who go and speak for the Saviour. As devoted servants of Christ, devoted to Him body and soul, they have to bow to His will, and go forth, their lives in their hands, denying themselves as the seventy were taught to do. Indeed all the rest of the description turns upon the sayings which accompanied the rule, "Let him deny himself."

The risks which their souls would run are given in the words of Jesus Himself. Those whom the Lamb of God sends out in His name are like lambs in the midst of wolves; surrounded on all sides by spiritual dangers: dangers from the attacks of the powers of evil, dangers from the temptations which come from seeing unholy sights and from hearing impure words: with no power of their own to meet the foe, no earthly power to help them; defenceless. Yet with spiritual death on all sides of them, knowing their own helplessness and the perils besetting them, they have to go forth at the word of Jesus, and risk their lives for Him: for "whosoever would save his life shall lose it."

Moreover they have to be men who are just as reckless with their bodily life; going forth without troubling whether there is any likelihood of its being provided for or not. Like the seventy who were to take no purse for money, no wallet for food, no shoes to replace their own when worn out, they leave it to their Lord to provide for them: for their bodies, as well as their souls, are in His keeping.

The next part of the description of a messenger of Christ is drawn from the directions given them for their journey to the house which, for the time being, was to be the headquarters of two of them. They were to be men who would treat their work as a matter of urgency. Neither friend-

ship, nor the customs of their country, were to turn them aside. Such claims were to have no hold upon them whatever. To whomsoever they were sent, they were to go straight from Jesus. Though messengers of peace, no greeting of peace were they to stop and give until they came to the house whither they were bound; and then, at their entering, they were to fill that house with peace. The peace which they would bring was the peace of which the angels sang when heralding the Saviour's coming: the peace among men in whom God is well pleased; the great peace which comes to the penitent heart which the Saviour makes His home.

In that house they were to live on charity: eating and drinking what was set before them; accepting whatsoever the people saw fit to give, whether much or little, whether likesome or not. There was nothing lowering in receiving those things. They were not alms, they were wages; not wages paid by the people to their servants, but by the Lord of the harvest to His labourers.

There was one thing more, however, which the evangelist thought necessary to tell Theophilus in support of the instruction which he had received; and that was, that, although they were labourers, and those doles were their wages, there was this great difference between them and other labourers. Earthly labourers seek to better themselves by going where they will get more for their work; whereas labourers in the harvest of the Lord have no such earthly aim. They "go not from house to house" for the sake of being better off, or more comfortable. They seek no earthly benefit for themselves in the harvest-work of God.

Then comes the centre-piece of the picture: those men entering into cities into which Jesus Himself intended to come.

It was in such places as those that a judge would hold his court, attended by two officers to set offenders before him with a record of their wrong-doings. The work of those

whom Jesus sent before His face would also be amongst sinners, and they, too, would have to hear what wrongdoers had done, and lay their case before Him: but after that there came a difference so great that judging sank out of sight, and only the welcome of Jesus was to be seen. For the aim of an earthly judge was, that no offender should escape the due reward of his deeds; but that the guilty should be branded as guilty, with the stain of his sin clearly showing upon him: whilst the aim of Jesus, the Judge of all, was that that which was lost should be sought and saved; and that those who were brought before Him should be freed from guilt, their stain taken away, and they themselves restored spotless to the presence of God. So He used the seventy as His officers by making them messengers, and sending them to persuade people to come and be reconciled to God.

Being officers of the Judge they would be provided for by members of the city to which they were sent; but, as shown by their having to eat what was set before them, they were still to be the same labourers in the harvest of God, the same humble, self-denying men already described. They were to come with no earthly power, compelling, enforcing; treating offenders as prisoners in chains, to be dragged to their trial: but to come like their Master, and leave it to the culprits themselves whether to appear or not, whether their case should be heard then, or not: for those who would receive the welcome of Christ must come willingly.

To sinners who received them they would come in mercy; for, as symbolized by the command to tend those who were sick, they were messengers of Him Who was sent to heal the contrite in heart. Their message to them was, that the kingdom of God was come nigh unto them, the rule of God against which they had rebelled: but it was in mercy and love, not in judgment, that it was coming upon them. There was more to be done before those who had

fallen away were cleansed and restored; but the bright hope was theirs, for they had received the messengers of Christ.

As for those who did not repent, and would not receive Christ's messengers, no judgment was pronounced upon them; no sentence passed. They were left to the justice of God. There in the open street, apart from those who had rejected them, the messengers of Christ were to stand, shaking off the very dust from their feet; to show that, from henceforth, such people had neither part nor lot with them. Their responsibility as Christ's messengers had ceased, and they were pure from the blood of those people. They had done their best to bring them back to God through Christ, and they would not come. The kingdom of God was nigh; but it was in its terrible power and justice upon the impenitent. How awful would be their doom was shown by the examples given; three in number, because illustrating the rejection of the messengers, the rejection of Christ Who sent them, and the rejection of the Father Who had sent Him. Those three examples were: the fate of the cities to which Jesus had sent those messengers; the fate of Chorazin and Bethsaida in which He had done so many mighty works; and the fate of Capernaum which the Son, Whom the Father sent, had made His own,—the city for which no place in heaven was found.

One more quotation was enough to complete this part of the portrait of these messengers of Christ, and to give Theophilus the required assurance that Christ's Spokesmen do indeed represent Him, and speak for Him. It taught him very plainly that those who had received this Ordination represented Him so completely, that people who received their word received the word of the Saviour Himself; and those who rejected them, not only thereby rejected Christ, but also rejected God the Father. "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth Me; and he that rejecteth Me rejecteth Him that sent Me."

Everything which the evangelist has so far told Theophilus about the Spokesmen as officers of Christ was what everyone, clergy and laity alike, would want to be made sure of: but there was something more which he himself needed specially to know as a Spokesman of Christ, and about that the evangelist assured him by a further word-picture; but this time of what the human eye could not see.

It began with the sight of the seventy returning with joy from the work which had looked so dangerous. As lambs in the midst of wolves they had gone forth in the name of Jesus, and they had found that name to be almighty: even devils were subject unto them, and owned their sway, not able to withstand messengers of Christ. But were they right in having such a joy? Had their souls indeed come out unstained from the evil surroundings amongst which they had been? Was there nothing in that work which could be laid to their charge at the judgment seat of God?

Such questions the evangelist answered by three short quotations from the words of Jesus, showing that a joy, deeper even than that which the seventy had felt, should fill the hearts of those whom Jesus uses thus.

Those quotations began with, "I was beholding Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." Satan is here the accuser of the people of God: and the seventy learned that whilst they were acting as Christ's messengers, their accuser had vanished from heaven, and was as unable to return as lightning which has passed. There was none to lay anything to the charge of those whom Christ sent forth in His name.

Moreover, the Judge's officers have their Lord's safe-conduct. No spiritual injury can come to them from doing His work. Why the seventy had gone forward so safely and triumphantly was because Christ had given them authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, as well as authority

over all the power of the enemy; and had promised that nothing should in any wise hurt them. "Serpents" would represent the subtle suggestions of evil; evil thoughts and feelings which glide into the mind and heart, and poison the person's life: whilst the "scorpions" would be the ill-will and spite of people to whom they were sent to speak in the name of the Lord; against the fear of whom Ezekiel had been warned (Ezek. 2: 6). All who care for their bodily lives shun places which harbour serpents and scorpions, and carefully avoid treading upon them: but, sent by Christ, His servants go boldly into places infested with the dangers those creatures symbolize, sure that no harm will come from them. As for the power of the foe which was holding down the people to whom they were sent, which ever strives to keep hold of its prey, and strives above all to work the downfall of officers of Christ, over all the power of that enemy He gave them authority; and by that authority they could deliver all who were willing to be delivered, and could bring to nought all efforts against themselves, for by virtue of that authority the powers of evil bowed to them.

So the seventy had returned filled with joy at the marvellous change in the attitude of the powers of evil when spoken to in the name of Jesus: but Theophilus learned that the joy which ought to fill the hearts of those who, as Christ's officials, go forth into the midst of evil, throwing away their lives for His sake, should arise from the knowledge that they will assuredly find their lives again. Their names are already written in heaven, in the Sanhedrin of God—that body of holy messengers, called angels, who go forth on God's errands of mercy and love:—written in the book of life. "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it."

## b. 3.

## MESSENGERS OF GOD.

*Beginning.* v. 19. And not finding by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went up to the housetop, and let him down through the tiles with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

*General.* G. 3:1:1. The Advocate—Seeing the glory of the Redeemer. (The Transfiguration.)

*Special.* x. 21-24. Christ rejoicing.

The seventy had gone to every city and place into which Jesus was about to come, and having prepared for His coming, had returned, and were standing before Him, waiting for Him to set out: but instead of going with them, to those cities and places, He began to fit them to go by themselves and carry the messages He wanted given. Like John the Baptist, they were to give the knowledge of salvation unto people by the remission of their sins through the tender mercy of God; and the messages which they would bear would be declarations of mercy and forgiveness. The value set upon such messages by those to whom they are borne depends upon whose the messages are, and what right the messengers have to give them; and the value which the messengers themselves set upon them, and upon their office, depends also upon the same things. That is why the evangelist, in assuring Theophilus about this part of his instruction, told him what the seventy were taught to know and believe about Jesus of Nazareth Who had sent them out and was preparing them for the messages they were to carry back.

The ground-work of the first part of the lesson is found in the third scene in the forgiveness of the sick of the palsy: that in which the bearers went up to the housetop, and having opened the roof, singled out Jesus from all who were in the room below, and let the man down at the Saviour's feet. It was a voiceless scene. In silence, they

were pictured uncovering the roof; in silence, finding Jesus by the light from above; in silence, laying the man at His feet. Not a word was said to show what they thought they were getting for the man, or how they had gained the knowledge which made them approach Jesus thus; nor was any clue given as to what they saw in Jesus to make them turn to Him, and to Him alone. That silence was now broken; and Theophilus began to learn about the Man and the men: about Jesus, at Whose feet sinners are laid; about those whom the bearers represent, and why they are so sure about Him and His power to save.

In the same hour in which the seventy, returning with joy from the work which Jesus had given them, had been told that their names were written in heaven, Jesus rejoiced. He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit; that is, as the Christ, the One upon Whom the Spirit of the Lord was resting; Whose God-given work it was to proclaim release to those who had fallen into sin. As the Christ, He had ordained them; and as the Christ, He was now rejoicing because the work, which He had been sent to do, was in train of being done: for now He had men to carry on His work of mercy; that great work of redemption, the glory of which is the freeing from sin.

Then He began to fit them for their work by telling them what every Spokesman had to know and believe before he could set out as a Welcomer for Christ. They were taught that it is in accordance with God's ways for men to do such work; that in times past He had used men for it, and had chosen them, not for their wisdom and understanding, but because, like babes, they could be taught what to say, and would repeat what they were told. That plan Jesus followed: openly confessing that it was the Father's, and one well-pleasing to Him.

Those silent bearers had sought for the man's release on earth: the release which the seventy, as Spokesmen of Christ, would give, would hold in heaven as well; for it was



as Lord of heaven and earth (that is, as the Head and Ruler of all things, Who orders all things in heaven and earth as He wills), that the Father had set the example which the Son was following. The charge to the seventy to give it, however, did not come direct from the Father. It was Jesus of Nazareth, the Man Who stood there before them, Who had ordained them, and was now sending them; and it was His message of release that they were to bear. How would delivering it in His name give it force in heaven? What value, indeed, would it have on earth? Would it be God the Father's absolution at all?

The answer which Theophilus had received to these and such like questions, found its confirmation in the things which the seventy then learned about Jesus. Like as those bearers, in a figure, had done, they were taught to view Him by the light from above. He stood there before them, just as He had appeared to those silent bearers, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of man; but all things were in His hands, they learned, having been delivered unto Him by His Father.

Nothing can withstand the name of Jesus. It is almighty. There is no band which He cannot break; no sin which He cannot take away; no burden of guilt which He cannot remove; no fruits of mis-doings from which He cannot deliver: for all things are in His hands. They are given Him by God the Father; and as the Christ, the anointed One, He acts for the Father, delivering the people of God from all their sins.

That, however, was not the limit of the assurance which Theophilus received. The seventy were taught, too, that it was not from a mere man, limited in knowledge, debarred by his nature from knowing the mind of God, that their messages would come. He Who stood there before them has another nature, one which no human being can know; for it is divine, and can be known by God alone. "No one knoweth Who the Son is, save the Father."

The seventy learned, moreover, that no man can of him-

self tell another that God has, or has not, forgiven him. No one can possibly know by himself whether this or that sin has been forgiven, for none can know the Father in the divine office which He fills in the hidden mystery of the reconciliation of mankind; that office which combines the righteous Judge, and the loving Father seeking to reconcile His estranged children and to win back their love. No one can of himself know the Father thus, and say what His verdict will be about those who come: for no one knoweth "Who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." The forgiveness of sins comes from the Father; but the only channel for it is through the Son. He alone knows the mind and will of the Father, and He alone can make them known. He is the Revelation of God, and as such, those who welcome in His name have to know Him.

The evangelist then passed on to the last part of the portrait of the Christ as the Deliverer of God's people. The scene which he set before Theophilus was Jesus taking His pupils into the sacred privacy of His life, into a deeper personal knowledge of Himself. Nothing was told him of what they were allowed to see and hear; for all that he needed to know had been fully and vividly pictured in that opening scene upon the mount of Transfiguration with which this section has to do. The sights about which Jesus spoke to the seventy in private were sights such as the three had seen upon the mount; and the words, such as they then had heard. The sight which the three had seen was the face of the Lamb of God pleading with the Father, and bright with the glory of His answered prayer; the words which they had heard were about His death, about the Atonement. Prophets and kings had desired in vain to see what those whom Jesus was training to be prophets and kings were allowed to see; prophets and kings had desired in vain to hear what those whom He was training were allowed to hear. In vain they had waited for forgiveness to come in answer to

their prayers: the prophets for those with whom they were pleading, and whom they were training; the kings for those over whom they were ruling. Happy are they, the Saviour declared, who gain an insight into the mystery of His being such as those seventy Spokesmen were gaining, and see and know Him as the Advocate with the Father, pleading as the Lamb of God Who died for sinners, and receiving from the Father the forgiveness of the sins, the release of the sinners. It takes God-awakened eyes to see Him thus; and it may only be as in a mirror darkly that servants of Christ can see that sight: but for all that, when doing this work, the vision of that Face radiant with the love of God yearning for His children should ever be present with them.

b. 4.

ACTING IN LOVE

*Beginning.* v. 20. And seeing their faith He said, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

*General.* G. 4:1:1. By love unfeigned.—Pitying.—(The pleading father.)

*Special.* x. 25-37. The good Samaritan.

In keeping with the plan which the evangelist has followed in this group of chapters, this fourth section is devoted to the actual doing of the work for which the seventy were then being trained. The beginning of what they needed for doing it had been pointed out in the lesson furnished by the silent bearers and the man whom they laid at the Saviour's feet. The man lying there, helpless and penitent, had pictured the state of the fallen whom the seventy, as Christ's Welcomers, were being taught to release: whilst the bearers in their sureness awaiting his healing, had shown what the first part was of what was needed for giving release; for it was their faith which had brought forth those words of release, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." That scene had dealt with the heavenward part of the Spokesmen's work; that of getting pardon for the penitent: there

still remained the earthward side, that of bearing pardon to the penitent; proclaiming for Jesus the captive's release, and getting him to accept it. Those silent bearers had to be made able to speak for Jesus.

What the seventy were taught about it was made clear to Theophilus by the lesson given to the man who stood up from amongst those who were sitting around Jesus. What Jesus had been saying to them we are not told; but it evidently dealt with what people had to do if they would become fit for the everlasting life in heaven; for it was by asking Him about what he would have to do to inherit eternal life that the man, about to depart, tried to test Him.

The man was a "lawyer," one skilled in the law: which meant, that his special work as a scribe was to know the will of God, and tell people how it concerned them and their doings; making His judgments known to them. It was as being a lawyer that he was set before Theophilus; and to him in his professional capacity the parable, and all that led up to it, has to be regarded as applying. That it applied to themselves also must have been very evident to the seventy: for they were being trained by Jesus to know the will of God, especially about those to whom they had gone to prepare for His coming; and they too were there ready to set out and make His will known to them.

It was with sinners, the kind of people to whom such men as the lawyer had to go and declare the justice of God, that what Jesus had been saying about inheriting eternal life had to do. What about the lawyer himself; one who knew God's will, and spent his time in telling people about it?

Of the two questions which Jesus asked him in return, only the answer to the second is recorded. The answer to the first one plainly was Lev. 18:5, "Ye shall keep all My ordinances and all My judgments, and shall do them; which if a man do, he shall live by them." His second question, "How readest thou?" was the one generally used when

asking for a text. It sought to find out what the lawyer's own view was of the way in which those ordinances and judgments should be done.

The man replied by quoting the law of love; love for God, and love for his neighbour: an answer which Jesus endorsed by saying, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." By thus endorsing it, and pointedly making it the way in which that lawyer should do his work, Jesus made it a rule of service for the kindred work for which He was then training the seventy. They learned that one of the things required for getting and giving God's message of pardon for penitent sinners as He would have it done was love: love for their fellow-man; love for God: and that their work had to be done thus, if they, whose names were written in heaven, would have that endless life with its endless service. From this it is evident that Theophilus had been taught that it was by both faith and love that the words, which would bring release to the sinner, were to be got and given.

The lawyer knew that he had failed: knew that in making God's will known to the erring he had shown hardness and unfeelingness, lack of pity, lack of love; and that such perfect service had not been his: and wishing to justify himself, he said unto Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"

Neighbour is a kind of relative word. It implies two parties, each of whom is neighbour to the other. If people were neighbours to the lawyer, the lawyer, of necessity, was neighbour to them; and it was from this second point of view, that of himself as neighbour to others, that the lesson was given which taught the seventy how to carry out God's law of love in doing their work of mercy, and inherit eternal life.

It began where their former lessons had left off. Those lessons had dealt with the heavenward part of their work; teaching them about the faith for getting the penitent's

release by the faith of the bearers, which had called forth that declaration of Jesus, "Thy sins are forgiven thee": and about the love, welling up in pity for the captives, by the father pleading to Jesus for his son's release from the bondage of the evil spirit. Now they were learning about the earthward part, the giving of the forgiveness to the penitent, getting him to accept.

The lawyer would know that the parable had to do with his own case, and that the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers symbolized those amongst whom his work lay; the work in doing which he had failed to carry out the law of love. The course of the people of God in freeing the land from its bondage of evil was from Jericho up to Jerusalem: and like as the man falling amongst robbers stood for a person falling into evil, so his going down from Jerusalem to Jericho stood for one who had turned his back on the onward march of God's people, and, like the publicans, had separated himself from them.

It was after the robbers had gone, that is, after the temptation is over, that the lesson began; when the man lay there helpless, like a penitent sorrowing for the evil into which he has fallen, his robe of righteousness gone, his soul sore wounded, unable to rise, unable to re-clothe himself. The great gift, which faith has obtained, has to be brought to the penitent by messengers of Christ; and what is needed for their doing this as Jesus wants it done was taught the seventy by means of those three figures which, one after another, were made to cross the scene before the lawyer's eyes: for the method of teaching followed in this parable is the same as that in the former lessons; and different personages are made use of to supply the several parts of the lesson.

First came a priest: one of those to whom it was given to declare whether a man were free or not from leprosy, that awful type of sin, and had become fit to be restored

to the congregation of the people of God. They did not do it of themselves, but as being commissioned by God; and their verdict would therefore be regarded as being the will of God. Seeing that they had to give such serious and far-reaching verdicts, they, above all men, were taught to know the mercy and love of God: for their duty it was to make the daily offering of the lamb, and all other sacrifices by which suppliants drew near to God. But in that priest there was something lacking; for it was only by chance that he had come where the fallen man lay, and then he passed by on the other side, leaving him to his fate.

Then a levite came on the scene, personifying another part of the lesson. Even if a man from whom the leprosy had departed had been pronounced clean, he was not free to rejoin the congregation of God's people until he believed what the priest had declared, and acted upon it by coming forward and offering the gift which Moses had commanded for a testimony. It was the levites' work to make everything ready, so that this could be properly done. They would have to tell the man what he ought to do; guide and help him, and, doubtless at times, encourage him to make his testimony before the people. They themselves would know well what to do, and how to do it; for as levites, they were teachers of the people, and had to know God's laws, including that law of love: but although he was one of those who knew God's will, the levite, when he saw the man, passed by likewise on the other side, and left him lying in misery. In him too there was something lacking.

Those two men, who behaved so much alike, pictured to the seventy, as of course they were meant to do to the lawyer, not two offices held by two people, but two parts of the same office held by one and the self-same person. The lawyer would see represented in them the two parts of his own work; that of declaring to people God's verdict upon them and their ways, and that of telling them what such people as they should do: whilst the seventy, as bearers to

the sin-stained of that assurance of cleansing which Jesus had given to the paralysed man when He said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," would see themselves represented also; for, in a figure, the levite's work was the rest of their duty as Welcomers; because a person whose sins have been forgiven has also to be made sure that he is now fit to stand before the Lord, and has to be taught, helped, and encouraged to do whatever is necessary to show that he has repented and been forgiven. The common failure of the priest and levite taught them that neither part of their duty could be carried out as Jesus wanted it done, unless they had that which both of those men lacked. What that was, was shown them by means of the Samaritan, the third who came upon the scene.

The Samaritans had the five books of Moses; so that the newcomer would also have known that law of love about which Jesus had said, "This do, and thou shalt live": but there all resemblance between him and the two passers-by ended. By no possible stretch of imagination could a Samaritan be thought of as sharing in the duties of either the priest or the levite; so that in learning the lesson taught by the last comer, the minds of the Spokesmen whom Jesus was training ran no risk of being bewildered by the presence of the office, but could be fixed solely upon the man himself, and see clearly what this great requisite was for doing their work as Jesus wanted it done.

It was not by chance that such a man as the good Samaritan came provided with all that was needed, and found the man who had fallen into evil hands. It all came in his day's journey; and as soon as ever he saw the man, he was ready in heart and means to supply his pressing need. And then there was his behaviour when, like the others, he caught sight of the wounded man. Instead of coldly turning away, he went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; like Spokesmen of Christ bind up the broken and contrite heart, and pour in the healing words of the



promises of God through Christ: and, like as they too have to do, he got the man to accept deliverance, encouraged and helped him to the fulness of his release.

What moved that Samaritan, and ruled his every action, was pity; the fruit of that love which the priest and the levite had lacked. The same tenderness of heart was his which the father had shown for his afflicted son; the same pity which, by wringing from him that great cry to the Teacher to look upon his son, had taught the seventy of the love and the pity which had to fill their hearts when bringing the fallen to Jesus. It was no passing emotion: not the pity which springs up so readily at the sight of suffering, and ceases when it is no longer seen; but a pity deep and lasting, which would not cease till the misery itself had ceased, and the man was restored to health. "Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee."

The lesson was driven home by Jesus' asking the lawyer, "Which of these three thinkest thou proved neighbour unto him that fell among the robbers?" The man replied, "He that showed mercy on him"; he who had the pity which the priest and levite lacked, and used it by doing all that he could for the wounded man. And the Lord stamped that answer with His own approval; and made it the expression of His own mind towards those whom the wounded man typified, by saying to the man who knew God's will, and stood there before Him ready to go his way, "Go, and do thou likewise": go and seek out those who are in need of release, giving full scope to all the pity which your heart can contain, and tell them in love what you have learned of God's will towards them.

In that command the seventy learned the mind of their Lord towards His fallen people, and what they were to do with the great gifts entrusted to them, the mercy and the forgiveness of sins which their faith would obtain: and they learned too, that if they, whose names were written in

heaven, would inherit eternal life, they would have to carry out their Lord's will, and go and do likewise; giving full vent to the heart of Christ within them, and His love for the fallen; going to those in need, and giving them the welcome of Christ bright with the beauty of His forgiving love. And from that lesson to the seventy Theophilus learned the certainty of the instruction which he had received about doing this part of the Spokesmen's work, and proclaiming release to captives by conveying the remission of sins.

b. 5.

HUMBLE SERVANTS OF CHRIST

*Beginning.* v. 21-26. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But Jesus perceiving their reasonings, answered and said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (He said unto him that was palsied), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thy house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his house, glorifying God. And amazement took hold on all, and they glorified God; and they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

*General.* G. 5:1:1. Lowly.—Humble.—(The little child by Jesus' side.)

*Special.* x. 38-42. Mary sitting at Jesus' feet.

The fifth sections of these chapters deal with the relationship of the pastor to the people; and show what Spokesmen have to be if their people are to be treated as Jesus wants them treated: the present section having to do with the treatment of the penitent whom they are welcoming in His name.

It forms a sequel to the closing scene in the forgiveness

of the sick of the palsy, of whose after-treatment nothing was said. Theophilus had been shown the man going on his way to his house, but about the welcome awaiting him there nothing had been told him; thus leaving part of his instruction still undealt with. What it was that he had been taught about the pardoned penitent can be gathered from the scene in Martha's house by means of which the evangelist assured him about it. The reason for the choice of this scene would have been that it gave the substance of the training which the seventy received, and had been used by Jesus Himself in giving them that training.

The evangelist began his description of the scene by pointing out to Theophilus the people who were to figure in it. First he showed him those with Jesus going on their way, like the man going on his way to his house. Then abruptly turning from them, he drew his attention to Jesus entering into a certain village, and being received into Martha's house. The title of "the Lord," which is again given to Him, showed that He was to be regarded as the Master of the house, and the two sisters as His servants. The personages thus introduced were there, of course, until the end of the scene; so that in the picture which was being shown Theophilus, those pupils of Jesus were there in the background, waiting, like travellers, for a welcome into the house; and looking at Him whilst He decided between the views of the two women inside as to how they should be treated so as to be made at home.

As already said, it is a continuation of the lesson begun in the closing scene of the forgiveness of the sick of the palsy; and the views of the two women about those whom they were welcoming for Jesus' sake resemble the two views of the change which took place in the forgiven man. It will be remembered that after having described how the man's body had been freed from the visible effects of his sin, and he had set out to take his place once more amongst his own people, the evangelist went on to tell Theophilus about

the two ways in which the sight affected those who were there. One was the delight of those enraptured with the bodily change; and the other, the awe of those who grasped the spiritual meaning of what Jesus had told the man to do, and knew that they were being taught that the forgiven man had been made able to arise from the deadly past, and set out with joy as a stranger and pilgrim in the world, and take his place once more amongst the people of God. The lesson stopped there without showing which view servants of Christ were to hold; or, what things a forgiven sinner was to expect them to do for him on his return.

Martha was evidently busying herself with externals, with the usual way of making wayfarers presentable and fit to be received; and her way represented the view of those first mentioned who were so much taken up with the doing away of the bodily traces of the man's sin. Their first thought had been for the man's palsy, the heritage of his sin. That paralysis stood for all degrees of the physical effects of sin upon people; from the total loss of bodily powers, down to the bondage of the slightest habit formed. All know that although bad ways may not actually bring bodily ailments with them, they leave their mark upon the man; and that even when he has turned against those evil ways, and, truly penitent, has been forgiven, traces of them still remain. Habits formed in the old life still cling to him: mannerisms, in themselves indifferent, yet jarring with the ways of those who have never led such lives. Martha, fussing over non-essentials, pictured to Theophilus those Welcomers for Christ who give their minds to setting such things right; thinking that by removing all such traces of his fall, and enabling him to take his place once more in the social life of the world, they are completing the reformation of the penitent sinner, and are doing their duty as Spokesmen of Christ.

Very few things, however, were really needed to make those men outside happy with the welcome awaiting them

within. They had, of course, to leave behind them their earth-laden shoes, and wash their soiled feet; but the main thing was for them to be sure that they were really wanted to come inside. Once sure of that, the rest would follow as a matter of course. What each one required was a personal invitation from the head of the house urging him to enter, and assuring him that he was fit to come in. In the scene sketched here, Jesus being the Lord, or Master of the house, the one thing needful for those whom He had brought to the door was the assurance that He really wanted them to come in; and Mary's part in the welcoming was to make them sure of it by carrying to this one, or that one, as he lingered outside, the loving message of Jesus urging him to enter just as he was; and on his entrance giving him the greeting of Jesus, the word which she had heard as she sat at His feet in the house He was treating as His own.

It was on Mary that their eyes were finally fixed as they waited outside for their welcome to come; and it was from her that they learned how they, in their turn, would have to act when welcoming the penitent for Jesus. They had come on their way with Him to the door of the house where He wanted them to be, like as a pardoned penitent would come to the door of his house, the congregation to which he belonged; and as Jesus wanted them to be received, so would they have to receive the returning penitent. It was not by following the example of Martha: the things, such as were needful, represented by her doings would fall to the lot of others; presumably the Helpers. The one of whom the Lord approved was Mary: and their place would be to act as providers of spiritual things; as bearers of the word of Jesus, of messages of welcome, encouragement, counsel. As such they were to regard themselves, and be regarded by the penitent.

The lesson from the little child by Jesus' side was given them as messengers of mercy waiting to go out to the peni-

tent in Jesus' name with the message of pardon and absolution: that from Mary sitting at His feet, as messengers of mercy waiting to welcome those who had received the message of pardon, and had been told to return. There was to be the same humility, the same self-surrender, the same self-effacement; for its meaning plainly was that as His Welcomers they would have to efface themselves so completely that those outside would be able to see clearly Jesus waiting to receive them; and that those who entered would see no one between themselves and Jesus their Reconciler to the Father.

In both cases the one who represented the messenger was with Jesus, at the Fountain Head: the little child by His side, ready to set out upon whatsoever errand the Saviour might wish to send him; Mary at His feet hearing the word that He wanted carried. In both cases, too, the results of bearing the message would be the same: and as those who received that little child in Christ's name would receive Christ Himself, and receiving Christ would receive the Father Who sent Him; so those who receive the assurance of the servants of Christ, speaking His word in His name, are receiving the assurance of Christ Himself, and also of the Father Who sent Him.

"Mary hath chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from her." Her way of receiving the wayfarers and making them at home formed, in a figure, the crown of the Welcomers' work; and it was with that part of the work of Christ that her choice had to do. It was indeed good; for it was to bring joy to the hearts of the penitent by giving them His word of pardon, assuring them of His welcome, and thereby completing the work of reconciliation. Spokesmen of Christ have other work to do for Him besides this; but the work of speaking for Him as the Saviour of men and giving absolution is so peculiarly theirs, that it may be called the distinctive work of the order. The authority to welcome in Christ's name, having once been given, "shall

not be taken away." It is the indelible mark of the spokesmanship.

c. 1.

GATHERERS FOR THE FATHER

xi. 1-4. Jesus teaching them to pray for themselves.

The opening remark, "And it came to pass as He was praying in a certain place," guards against linking what follows with the scene in Martha's house, and thus making it have to do with only the close of the Welcomers' work. It recalls that time in their general training when Jesus was praying alone, and, having finished, told those who wanted to enter His service, what things they would first have to do. Now that they had been ordained, and were about to set out in His service, they are again pictured as being present whilst He prayed; but this time they want to be also able to pray.

Again we find the Baptist's sayings and doings treated as things of common knowledge; and so much so, that the mere mention of his having taught his pupils to pray was enough to show the readers of the treatise what Jesus was wanted to do, and why He was asked to do it. As outlined by Gabriel, John's mission was to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just, and to make ready for the Lord a people prepared; and it would have been to help him to carry out that mission that he was training his pupils. It was to help Him to carry out the same three parts of His own mission that Jesus was training this batch of His pupils; and it was to enable them to do that work for Him that one of them made his petition, "Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples."

Both this and the other closing illustration have to do with the first and shortest of the five sections of the chapter; that which is made up of the command that Jesus gave to His welcomers, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the har-

vest that He send forth labourers into His harvest." To have gone into details then of what labourers ought to pray for, and how they ought to pray, would have spoiled the clearness of the chapter by hiding the aim of the section, which was simply to show Theophilus that Christ's Welcomers were to be men who made prayer the mainspring of their work for Him: so the evangelist has very fittingly put off till now the lesson upon prayer that was given them.

There were two ways in which that mark of fitness (being men of prayer) would show itself: in prayer for themselves, and prayer for others.

First they were to pray for themselves as labourers who were being cast out into the harvest of God to gather His children in. It was not as hired servants, however, that they had to pray; but as children of God, praying to their Father about gathering His lost children back again into His love: and as children of God replenished with the Father's yearning love, they were to go forth from His presence to bring the wanderers home. The right doing of the whole of their work for Jesus depended on prayer; and the lesson upon prayer which He gave them would have covered every part of it: but seeing that it was about the work of welcoming that the evangelist was now assuring Theophilus, he has only quoted those petitions of the Lord's Prayer which applied to them especially as Welcomers. Each of the five petitions which he has given refers to the corresponding number of the five divisions of the body of the chapter. The chapter being a summary of their training to be Welcomers, their prayer was to the effect that they might be good labourers in the harvest of God, fruitful in gathering in the lost.

They were to begin by praying that the Father's name might be hallowed. That petition was meant to be no empty form. The hallowing of their Father's name was to be the heart's desire of those who laboured in His harvest. His name, as the Father, is being hallowed when His children



are all living together in love under His care, their lives worthy of the name they bear. It is being dishonoured when that household is broken up, and its scattered inmates live and act unworthily of children of the God of love. Labourers whose heart is in that petition long to bring God's wandering children back in penitence to Him to live once more a life worthy of His family.

The second petition, "Thy kingdom come," applies to the second section of the chapter, the sending of the seventy. As Welcomers they had to go forth, risking soul and body, to seek those whom their Master wanted: they had to give up their home life and the earning of their living, and exist like tramps upon what was given them: but no thought of any of those things found a place in their prayer. Their petition was solely for the success of their work as forerunners of Christ. They had been told to encourage those whom they won to repentance with the assurance that "the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you": and their prayer was that the work thus begun might be finished; and that when the kingdom of God came nigh to those penitent sinners, it would come upon them and absorb them once more, and the lost would be welcomed back. Men whose hearts are in that petition do not hastily shake off the dust of their feet against those who will not receive them; but only at the last, when all means have failed, do they go their way and leave them to their fate.

The three remaining petitions are for the labourers themselves; not for their private needs, but for what they require as labourers in the harvest of God.

The bread for the coming day, for which the third petition prayed, was what they needed for strengthening them to do their day's work; what they needed as Welcomers to enable them to show sinners their Saviour, to lay them penitent at His feet. It was not for earthly bread that they were to pray, but for the things spoken of in the third section of the chapter as coming down from above. That

was the bread by which they were to live as Welcomers of Christ; their strength throughout the day: the God-given knowledge of God the Father which is only found in Christ and learned through Him; the knowledge of Christ Himself as seen by the bearers when they looked down into the room where He was waiting and the power of the Lord was with Him to heal. Day by day Christ's Welcomers have to be strengthened and refreshed by entering into the Father's presence; by sweet intercourse with their Saviour; by a deeper, personal knowledge of the Lord for Whom they have to speak. Filled with that knowledge of the Father's love in Christ, they go forth to greet His children returning.

The fourth petition of the labourers' prayer has to do with the forgiveness of sins. To understand it we only have to turn to the beautiful example given in the fourth section of the chapter, and see how thoroughly that good Samaritan must have forgiven all the unfriendliness of the Jews, and their deeds of ill-will against himself and his race, to have been able to act as he did. That same forgiveness has to mark the Welcomers of Christ. Their position with regard to their flocks is that of spiritual fathers over children: and children cannot fall into grievous sin without its reacting upon their fathers in the trouble, pain, and grief which it gives them, and in the estrangement which sin is so sure to cause. There are thus two parts in the forgiveness of fallen children of God, when in penitence they return. One is God's forgiveness which the Welcomer has to convey; and the other his own forgiveness for all that they have brought upon himself. We can easily see from the parable of the good Samaritan how dreadful it would be if a Welcomer cherished his own grievances, and failed to forgive those who caused them; how hard it would make it for him to welcome the sinners as he ought, and lead them to the mercy-seat of God: and we can understand why so awful an issue has been made to depend upon the giving of that forgiveness, even the Welcomer's own salvation. "Forgive

us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us." No hindrance to sinners' return must come from servants of Christ.

But it was not the absence of any bar between them that made the good Samaritan bind up the wounds of the fallen, and pour on oil and wine. That only accounted for there being no hesitation, no pause, between his seeing the man and going to him. What drew him to the fallen man was sympathy; and the well-spring of that in the hearts of Christ's Welcomers lies in the petition, "Forgive us our sins." Daily that prayer was to be offered. Each day's work was to be done by one who owned himself to be a sinner, and had sought, and found, forgiveness. The penitent sinner pardoned is the labourer who is cast forth by God to welcome penitent sinners seeking pardon: for he has that in his heart which will move him towards those in like need; that which will make him deal tenderly with the contrite in heart. To be forgiven and forgiving has to be his daily prayer. So Jesus taught them to pray for absolution before they went forth bearing the message of absolution; to pray for pardon for themselves before proclaiming pardon to others.

The last section of the chapter was about what took place as they went on their way with Jesus; and of the petition which has to do with that part of their work only the first part is given, "Bring us not into temptation." Things connected with the treatment of the pardoned penitent would put Welcomers of Christ to the proof. Amongst those whom they would have to gather into their Father's home there would, for instance, be cases of such gross sin, of such prolonged sensuality and evil living, of such life-long deadness and indifference, that it would be hard to believe that, in a moment, all those sins had been forgiven, all that foulness blotted out, and those people made fit to be welcomed fully and freely in God's name as if they had never fallen. There would be cases in which the coarse habits of a low

life had become so deeply engrained, that the people still seemed unfit to be companions of the godly: and such cases can hardly fail to try the labourers in the harvest of God. They are tempted to doubt the never-failing efficacy of the absolution pronounced; and, yielding to doubt, sink down to the level of those scribes and Pharisees who did not believe in the reality of the forgiveness of sins: or else judging the pardoned to be still unfit to be associated with, they join the ranks of such people as Martha, who hold that there is much to be done in outward transforming before the full welcome of Christ can be counted as given. And the bearers of pardon are apt to be tempted also to look down on the outcasts to whom they have brought the pardon, and to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. To safeguard them their Master taught them to pray, not as strong men, but as timid children crying to their Father, "Carry us not into trial." For it is the Father Who is making use of them when they are acting as word-bearers for the Son of His love: and to Him they plead, like little children, to remember that they are but weak and frail; and not to place them in situations too trying for their faith, too difficult for their childish ignorance.

c. 2.

TIRELESS PROVIDERS

xi. 5-13. Jesus teaching them to pray for others.

Another way in which their being men of prayer would show itself was in praying for those whom they were gathering in; lost children of God, who had come to put themselves under the care of His servants. About this they were taught by the parable of the midnight traveller.

The traveller represented a person on life's journey, overtaken by darkness, and turning for refuge to a Welcomer of Christ. The lack of food in the house taught the seventy that they would have nothing of their own for supplying the needs of such a one coming out of darkness;

whilst the way in which it was obtained taught them that, whatever those needs might be, they could, at any time, get for the asking everything that was wanted for supplying them. This was shown by the great assurance with which the man in the parable got all that he sought; and also by the number of loaves—for three is the number denoting completeness. Empty-handed though they are, Welcomers of Christ can provide by prayer for all who come to them: for they ask as friends of Christ.

The needs to be supplied were such as would be felt by a midnight traveller like the one in the parable; so that the three rules which Jesus gave them may be taken as having to do with getting the three things which, as Welcomers for Him, they would need when bringing in a man out of the darkness of sin and error, cleansing him, and making him at home: things dealt with in the last three sections of this chapter, and put so plainly in the last three of the account of the forgiveness of the sick of the palsy; namely, the way to bring him to Jesus, absolution, and restoration.

First, they had to get light from above, in order to find out how to bring the sinner back repentant and do as those bearers had done, lay him at the Saviour's feet; and the directions which Jesus gave them were "Ask and it shall be given you." "For every one that asketh receiveth," and no servant of Christ need fail.

To find the cleansing which such a traveller needs to free him from the defilements got in the darkness, the forgiveness which the bearers sought and found for the palsied man, they had only to seek in prayer; "for he that seeketh, findeth" the balm of healing for the wounded soul, the pardon for his sins.

And then to gain the welcome for the pardoned, welcome into the household of which Christ is the Lord, the great gathering of the Father and His children, the way was still prayer: "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." The door of welcome is always ready to fly open for those whose

hearts the forgiveness of Christ has reached; ready to open to the labourers gathering in the harvest of God whensoever they knock in prayer: for Christ's promise is true, "and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."

Tirelessness in prayer, tirelessness in providing as a loving friend for the wayfarer coming out of the darkness, is a mark of a Welcomer for Christ.

But how were Christ's Welcomers to know what to pray for, and how to pray as they ought? The needs would be so various; the people so hard to understand. Like as it was with those to whom they had been sent, some would receive them and others would not; some would come to them as children to their fathers; others would turn their backs upon them, and go elsewhere to have their needs supplied: some would know what it was they needed, and others would not: and for every case the Welcomers would have to come in prayer to the heavenly storehouse of the goodness of God, and get the very thing needed.

It is plain that Theophilus had been taught that it was by the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit that those prayers should be made: for it is with getting the Holy Spirit that the rest of this lesson upon prayer has to do.

Although they were labourers in the harvest of God, acting as fathers of the flocks under their care, and welcomers of the lost children of God, the seventy, and all other members of their order, were always to look on themselves as children, children of God the Father Who had cast them out to do that work. Their own needs as children would be great; but how much greater would they be when, poor and helpless, they were burdened with the needs of others. But as the Lord taught them, if imperfect earthly fathers give their children the things which belong to their earthly well-being when they ask for them, much more will the perfect heavenly Father give His children, when they ask Him, the perfect gift of the Holy Spirit; the Source of all the spiritual gifts which they need for themselves and for their work

as labourers in God's harvest; their Guide in all that they ought to do for the midnight travellers who come to them, in all that they have to get as spiritual fathers for those under their care. Through prayer, they would receive the Holy Spirit to help them, in their prayers for others, to get them the things that they needed. From the beginning to the end of his service the Welcomer rests on prayer.

## CHAPTER I.

ST. LUKE XI. 14.—XII. 12.

(a). xi. 14-16. (b). xi 17-52. (c). xi. 53.—xii. 12.

(a).

xi. 14-16. And he was casting out a devil which was dumb; and it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb man spake. And the multitudes marvelled. But some of them said, By Beelzebub the prince of the devils casteth he out devils; and others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

(b). 1.

17-22. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand, because ye say that I cast out devils by Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you.

When the strong man fully armed guardeth his own court, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him his whole armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

2.

23-28. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

The unclean spirit when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will turn back unto my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and



taketh to him seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man cometh worse than the first.

And it came to pass, as he said these things, a certain woman out of the multitude lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

### 3.

29-36. And when the multitudes were gathered together unto him, he began to say, This generation is an evil generation: it seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah. For even as Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn them: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here.

No man, when he hath lighted a lamp, putteth it in a cellar, neither under the bushel, but on the stand, that they which enter in may see the light. The lamp of thy body is thine eye: when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, thy body also is full of darkness; look therefore whether the light that is in thee be not darkness. If therefore thy whole body be full of light, having no part dark, it shall be wholly full of light, as when the lamp with its bright shining doth give thee light.

### 4.

37-44. Now as he spake, a Pharisee asketh him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he was not first baptized before dinner.

And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter; but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness. Ye foolish ones, did not he that made the outside make the inside also? Howbeit give for alms those things which are within; and behold, all things are clean unto you. But woe unto you Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and every herb,

and pass over judgment and the love of God: but these ought ye to have done, and those ought not to be present.

Woe unto you Pharisees! for ye love the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces. Woe unto you! for ye are as the tombs which appear not, and the men that walk over them know it not.

## 5.

45-52. And one of the lawyers answering saith unto him, Teacher, in saying this thou reproachest us also.

And he said, Woe unto you lawyers also! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

Woe unto you! for ye build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. So ye are witnesses and consent unto the works of your fathers: for they killed them, and ye build their tombs. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send unto them prophets and apostles; and some of them they shall kill and persecute; that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zachariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary: yea, I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation. Woe unto you lawyers! for ye took away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

## (c). 1.

xi. 53-xii. 3. And when he was come out from thence, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press upon him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things; laying wait for him, to catch something out of his mouth.

In the meantime, when the many thousands of the multitude were gathered together, insomuch that they strode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. But there is nothing covered up, that shall not be revealed: and hid, that shall not be known. Wherefore whatsoever ye have said in the darkness shall be heard in the light; and what ye have spoken in the ear in the inner chambers shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

## (c). 2.

4-12. And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

And I say unto you, Every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he hath denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God.

And every one who shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven. And when they bring you before the synagogues, and the rulers, and the authorities, be not anxious how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say.

## CHAPTER I. XI. 14.—XII. 12.

### TEACHERS

*a.* xi. 14-16. *b.* 17-52. *c.* xi. 53.-xii. 12.

*Beginning of Training.* v. 27-32. The call of Levi.

*General Training.* Chap. G. First sub-division of the second part of each section.

#### *a.*

xi. 14-16. *Introduction.* The second part of the work for which Jesus was training them was to teach the people for Him. The teaching which they would have to give was not that which He had given from the boat on the lake of Genesaret;—that had been entrusted to the Helpers, and is what is usually known as Gospel preaching, or doing the work of an evangelist—but was that which He gave the people at Bethsaida when He spoke to them about the kingdom of God. In His commission it was referred to as proclaiming recovering of sight to the blind, and formed part of His work as the Prophet; the office which He acknowledged as His own in the synagogue at Nazareth, and in connection with which He referred to the mission of Elijah to the widow at Sarepta. God had commanded her to do something, and the prophet made her know and understand God's will, and encouraged her to do it: and that, briefly speaking, is what Spokesmen of Christ have to do; to teach people the laws and ways of the kingdom of God, and get them to walk in them; or, as it was described in the case of John the Baptist, to turn the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just. For that work, the petition of the

Lord's Prayer which they would use would be, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."

As members of the Sanhedrin of God's kingdom, the seventy would have to act as lawgivers. Not that they would have the power to create laws. Their part would merely be to teach and apply principles and rules already laid down; so that their lawgiving would consist in telling people the law of God and its meaning; how it applied to their several cases, and what line of conduct they ought to follow: work which has more of teaching in it, than of what is usually known as legislating.

In the scene near Bethsaida, which furnished Theophilus with the key to the instruction the seventy were receiving, the multitudes whom Jesus had welcomed were being used to represent the many nations, who had gone up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob, and were waiting for Him to report to them His way: whilst the dumb man in this chapter served to show the first steps in the raising up of messengers to make that way known to them. For as its introduction shows, the chapter is about Jesus preparing and training men to speak. "He was casting out a devil which was dumb; and it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb man spake." There are two parts in that account: the first about the casting out of the devil, which is spoken of as if it were a work of time; and the other about the dumb man speaking: and these are dealt with in the first two sections of the chapter; the sections which describe the kind of man that Jesus uses.

"The multitudes marvelled." Jesus taught with authority; but so far the evangelist has recorded no special token that the authority on earth to proclaim the laws and ways of the kingdom of God was so absolutely His, that He could commission whomsoever He would to carry on for Him that God-given work. That token he now mentioned; the token of lips unsealed, at which the multitudes marvelled. In the proof which he was building up for The-

ophilus, that work of power, the sign of the loosened tongue, forms the connecting link between Jesus of Nazareth receiving His commission from God, and Jesus of Nazareth commissioning men to act for Him. Like as with the rest of the signs which Jesus gave of His having authority on earth to do certain things, he has placed it where it best fitted in with the plan of the treatise; but the commission to carry on the Prophet's work of instructing the people was, of course, given to the seventy at their Ordination.

The closing statements, that some of the people said that He cast out devils through Beelzebub the prince of the devils, and that others tempted Him by seeking of Him a sign from heaven, furnish the topics for the two sections of the chapter which deal with the power that Jesus used, and the sign that He gave. They are the opening sections of the two main divisions of the chapter.

The way in which the several parts of the Spokesmen's work are dealt with is very noteworthy. All three of them are covered by the training in Chapter G, and the Ordination that followed committed them all to the order which the seventy represented; but only one of them was inseparably theirs. The authority to welcome in Jesus' name, that is, to absolve, belonged to all the members of the order of Spokesmen, and no one could take it away: but not so with the other two parts of their work. As regards the teaching of the law; from the way in which, both in the call of Levi and in the casting out of the dumb devil, the account of the training for it is made to start again at the very beginning, it is evident that although it too belonged to the order of Spokesmen, it was looked upon as a special gift which a member of the order might, or might not, have; though, of course, all would need it to a certain extent as shepherds of the flock of Christ.

The arrangement of the chapter is the same as that of the account of the call of Levi, the man who was set free from the influence which was keeping him dumb about the

law of God. In just the same way as the freeing and testing of Levi formed the topics of the first two sections of that account, and then he was lost sight of amongst the pupils of Jesus whose training occupied the last three; so the freeing and testing of a man who had been under the influence of evil form the topics of the first two sections of this chapter, and then he too disappears from view, and the rest of the chapter is filled with three lessons given to the pupils whom Jesus was training to instruct the people for Him. In each section of the chapter the subject of the corresponding part of the general training in Chapter G is enlarged upon.

*Summary.* The chapter traces the steps of a man who, by the inworking of the Holy Spirit, is passing from a state of dumbness to that of being able to speak about the kingdom of God. First, the evil influence which has kept him dumb is swept away. Then the man, with the evil influence gone from him, and free to use his newly found gift of speech, gives evidence of his fitness for the career set before him. After that come the three leading features of the training which Jesus held to be necessary for men who were to carry on His work of teaching people about the kingdom of God. From beginning to end, the preparation is the work of the Holy Ghost, Who spake by the prophets.

Of the two marks of fitness for becoming an Instructor in the kingdom of God, the first was that the man was under no rule but that of Christ; that his will was sunk in the will of Christ; that he was obedient: the second, that he was actively devoted to Christ; His man, faithful and true. As regards the three essentials for being a good and powerful teacher of righteousness, the first was that he should be modelled upon the Son of man, the Preacher and Teacher: the second, that he should be single-eyed, sincere; having a clear and true understanding of the things he would have to teach; able to teach them in their due proportion; and living them out in his own life: the third, that

he should be a man of God, as the prophets of old were meant to be; dealing with the people as one sent from God to declare His will, and lead His wandering children back to Him.

The first of the closing illustrations furnishes examples of the working of the rules for testing whether people are really Christ's men, or not; whilst the second throws a clearer light upon the men of God. The last section in the body of the chapter dealt with them in their relationship to God's people; the last illustration deals with them in their relationship to God Himself, and shows what the attitude of men of God must be with regard to each of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

b. 1.

SLAVES OF CHRIST

*Beginning.* v. 27, 28. And after these things He went forth, and beheld a publican, named Levi, sitting at the place of toll, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he forsook all, and rose up and followed Him.

*General.* G. 1:2. Obedient. (The feeding of the five thousand.)

*Special.* xi. 17-22. Christ conquering by the Holy Spirit.

The evangelist began, as usual, by showing Theophilus the kind of men that Jesus required for the work. No natural gifts distinguished them. They were to be sent, like the prophets of old, to make His way known to the many nations who would go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and the mark which the prophets had borne was the mark of fitness which they, too, would have to bear. That mark was a complete surrender of will; that which shows itself in perfect obedience, the unquestioning obedience of slaves: so vitally important was it that they should all say the same thing, teach the laws of God and His alone, and teach them as Jesus delivered them. Levi had shown that he had that mark when he



bowed to the will of Jesus, and followed Him: and the twelve also showed that they had it when they carried out that strange order that He gave them, and arranged the five thousand in companies of the size required.

That much Theophilus had been shown: but he had not been shown how people become able to yield an obedience like that: he had not been told what the power was in the gaze of Jesus that had wrought in the heart of Levi, and set him free to obey; or what influence it was that He exercised over the twelve, when He bowed all their wills to His, and made them act together as one man. For it was no ordinary obedience that Jesus required. It was due to no earthly power compelling, to no course of human training moulding them; but was brought into being in the way described in this section.

It was an extreme case of unfitness with which the section deals; a case such as that of the man in the introduction to the chapter who was unable to speak at all because of the evil influence under which he was. By means of it Theophilus was shown how Jesus taught that men are delivered from the power of evil and made subject to His will; thus becoming endowed with the first mark of fitness that He required.

Two stages in the transformation are given: the first, the overcoming of that which had influence over the man; the second, the overcoming of the man himself. Those two stages form the subjects of the two parts of the section.

The two maxims which head the section point out the nature of the mark of fitness, and why it should be required. The form in which they are given is in keeping with the fact that those who are chosen are meant to be messengers from the mountain of the Lord, and from the house of the God of Jacob. Each maxim is connected with one of the two parts of the section.

The first maxim is, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation." A kingdom, which is to

flourish, as the Church is meant to flourish, and gather in unceasingly from every tribe and tongue and people and nation to live in perfect harmony, must have no divisions. There must be in it only one authority and power; that of its Head. No power but His can bear rule in that kingdom; no laws but His can run there. Those who come from the mountain of the Lord to bring to the nations the report of His way, have to own Him as the Lord, and Him alone. Every opposing influence has to be cast off, and the messengers set free to serve Him.

Any influence which ties the tongue of one who should be speaking for Christ, and keeps him from saying what He wants said, is an evil influence; and is represented by the dumb devil that was in possession of the man in the introduction. People who are under such an influence, are not necessarily dumb as we understand the word. We may take it for granted that Levi could speak, and from the practice which he must have had in his business, could speak fluently; but for all that he was unable to speak for Christ about the kingdom of God. He had first to be set free from the ungodly influence to which he had yielded; and there was only one power that could do it. Satan would not; for the evil one does not cast out evil. Satan could not; for only a good influence can really deliver a person from evil. The only power to set tongues free to speak for God is the power of the Spirit. That was the power which worked in the heart of Levi, the publican, and made him willing and able to obey the word of Jesus; that was the power which Jesus used in casting out the dumb devil, and of which He spoke as "the Finger of God."

The expression is found in Ex. 31:18, where we are told that "He gave to Moses, when He left off speaking to him on mount Sina, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone written upon with the Finger of God." Those tables of the testimony were epistles of God to His people to keep them in mind of the laws which He had given them. In-

stead of tables of stone, the Prophet like unto Moses prepared the hearts of men. By the Finger of God, that is, by the power of the Holy Ghost, He cast every unholy influence out of them, so that the rule of God could have undivided sway, and His laws be written upon their hearts, and they could be made His epistles, to be used by Him to keep people in mind of the laws which He had given them.

But the wonderful changes made by the power of the Holy Ghost in such men as Levi the publican and the man with the unclean devil, were not simply signs that Christ had made them His epistles. The loosened tongue also bore witness to His God-given authority and power to carry out this part of His communion, and showed every one that the kingdom of God had come, as it had come before on Sinai; and that God's great Lawgiver was there to give the laws of His kingdom in all their fulness, and to teach the people to know, and understand, and follow them.

The second part of the section has to do with the maxim, "A house against a house falleth." Two houses are spoken of here, but only one falls; the house which is against the other. The house which never falls is the house of the God of Jacob to which the many nations go to learn His way. The house which is against the other is represented in the parable by the strong one fully armed guarding his own court.

It is plain from the parable that the lesson has now passed from the kingdom generally to the individuals composing the kingdom; and that it is a human being and his faculties that are the house which is against the other. The opposing influence is no longer an external one, the power of the kingdom of Satan; but lies within the man himself. He is self-willed; independent; holds his own views; goes his own way. His goods, that is, his faculties, are at peace; unused by Christ, and useless for His service: for as long as the man stands thus in his independence, he is against the house from which the teaching

comes; and being against it, falls. He has to become one with the house of God, yield willing obedience to its Head, have his unbending will broken, and give up his own way, before he can become fit to enter the ranks of those from whom the Instructors are drawn.

Nothing is said about the power by which the strong man was overcome and his faculties made subject to Christ; but as it was still the transformation of the man with the dumb devil that was being traced, the power that was used was the same as before. By the power of the Holy Ghost the evil influence had been swept away; by the power of the Holy Ghost the man himself was overcome and enabled to yield the obedience which Jesus requires: for it was still the Finger of God which Jesus, the Stronger than he, was using. It is the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost which delivers a man from the power of evil and then rescues him from himself; and goes on until he and all his faculties are at the service of Jesus, until he has no will but the will of Jesus.

The parable thus gave Theophilus an insight into what took place in each of the twelve, when the whole band bowed as one man to the will of Jesus. And it was the same power of the Holy Ghost which worked in each of the seventy, and brought forth that obedience to Him which formed his first mark of fitness for becoming an Instructor in the kingdom of God. Each had to act as a slave of Christ; for in the kingdom of God there was to be no clash of wills; no one setting up his own views of what laws should be kept, or what should not. All were to be of one mind in that kingdom; all were to have but one will, the will of Christ.

## b. 2.

## CHRIST'S MEN

*Beginning.* v. 29. And Levi made Him a great feast in his house: and there was a great multitude of publicans and of others that were sitting at meat with them.

*General.* G. 2:2. Daily cross-bearers. (Unashamed of Christ, and His words.)

*Special.* xi. 23-28. The unused house, and the woman's blessing.

The second section is a counterpart of the first. It traces the career of the same man, and traces it in the same way, in two stages; the first of which forms a sequel to the stage described in the first part of the former section, and the second, to that described in the second part. The same power, the power of the Holy Spirit, which had wrought in the man to make him obedient, was still working within him to raise him to the second stage of fitness which Jesus required of those who were to teach for Him.

The section opens, as the former one did, with a general principle: "He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathered not with Me scattereth." This saying is also made up of two parts; each of which is dealt with in its turn in just the same way as the two parts of the saying were which introduced the other section.

The first part, "He that is not with Me is against Me," left no room for doubt about the kind of man that Jesus required. It sharply divided people into two classes, and only two: those with the great Teacher of righteousness, and those against Him. There was no place for neutrals: none for people who took no active part with Christ in His work. Not to be engaged on Christ's side is to be against Him. The parable about the evil spirit that returned showed that. In that parable, the career of the man is carried on from the point where the first part of the last section left off. The evil spirit had been cast out; but the

house, swept and garnished, showed no signs of use. The man, highly respectable, an ornament of society, was doing nothing for Christ. He was a silent member of the Church. So the evil influence returned with sevenfold force; and the man became, not only more hopelessly dumb for teaching righteousness than before, but a greater instrument for evil than ever. A man's speech may be faltering and feeble; but if his heart is with Jesus and His work, he will manage somehow to speak on His behalf. Levi, making a great reception in his house, was an example of the way in which this mark of fitness for being an Instructor for Christ would begin to show itself. Those publicans and others were not there unasked. It was because they had been spoken to, told about the great Teacher and their need of Him, asked to come, urged to come, that they were there in such numbers; drawn by the earnest pleading of the publican whom Christ had delivered from the spirit of worldliness. The genuine desire to come after Christ, and carry on the teaching which He was giving people about the kingdom of God, begins to show itself in the man's trying to get people to come and hear that teaching. He may, perchance, get them to come in crowds as Levi did, or in ones and twos as ordinary people do; but try he must: for such efforts to get people to come and hear about the laws and ways of the kingdom of God are necessary proofs of fitness for carrying on this work of the great Teacher, and turning the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just. There is no place for an idle follower in the ranks of Christ's Instructors; no place for a silent Christian, however good living he may be. To be with the Teacher is to side with Him, to use the voice for Him; and he, whom Christ has called, who is not with Him thus is against Him; and is unfit for the office of a teacher of righteousness. His heart has to be so set upon turning the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just, that he already does what he can to help on that work.

The second part of the section takes up the career of the man where the second part of the former section left off, and deals with the stage which follows his conquest by the power of the Holy Spirit: that of his being tested for work for Jesus. The work was that of a Teacher in His Church; and the test is found in the second part of the opening saying. It is not merely the rule in the first part of the saying put into another form; for "He that gathereth not with Me scattereth" brings something new into the lesson. It brings into consideration the way of doing the work which God wants done—that of guiding wandering feet into the right path, and leading His people along the way of righteousness an unbroken flock. They are being scattered instead of gathered, if they are given any other guidance than that which Jesus gave; or taught any other way than that which He taught and followed. Only men who will gather with Him are wanted by Jesus; and the rest of the section shows how such men are to be known. The test lies in the use which a man makes of his faculties, notably that of speech.

The opening words, "And it came to pass as He said these things," not only show that what follows forms part of the section, but also links it very closely with what the seventy had just been taught. It was as He was uttering His words of warning to those who thought they could be with Him without doing anything for Him, that, from the listening multitude, there came the voice of a woman calling down a blessing upon the womb which had upheld Him, and the breasts which He had sucked. And the reply of Jesus confirmed that blessing upon His mother, and also upon all to whom the words of the woman, as a parable, apply: upon all who are with Him, upholding Him, as Levi upheld Him when he gathered those publicans and others about the great Teacher; and, by thus enabling Him to teach them, supplying Him with that food which He described as doing the will of the Father Who had sent Him.

But the blessing more especially rests upon those who are guarding the word of God. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and guard it"; preserving God's laws unaltered as Jesus had everywhere made them known. Guarding the word of God is a mark of true members of the Sanhedrin of His kingdom, as making a hedge around the law was of the Sanhedrin of the Jews. It is no empty form to stand sentinel over the word of God. The man who is guarding God's word does not sit silent whilst others scoff, and seek to loosen the strictness of the law of God as taught by Christ; nor does he look on with indifference whilst God's laws are being made a dead letter: but, speaking boldly, and upholding those laws in their entirety in the face of all men, he defends the word of God against all who would alter, or destroy it.

The kind of man who will act thus has already been pointed out in the chapter upon the general training of Spokesmen. There we learn that he is a daily cross-bearer; one who of his own accord takes up his cross daily, and, not ashamed of his Master or His words, unceasingly shows himself, in the face of the world, to be Christ's man. What turned so many against Jesus, and brought Him to the cross, was His teaching about the kingdom of God. For the kingdom of God as proclaimed by Him was not the kingdom which they wanted; its laws, as laid down by Him, were laws which they would neither follow, nor teach; and His way of teaching them was a way which they would not recognize, for He spoke as one having divine authority. As the Teacher of the laws and ways of the kingdom of God, Jesus stood alone; separate from all those other teachers; opposed by them all. And the man who takes up his cross daily has to take his stand with Him, and daily uphold the teaching which brought his Master to the cross.

We are told that at mount Sinai those who vowed to hear and do the word of God were sprinkled by Moses with the blood of beasts (Ex. 24:8): when those who take up



their cross hear the word of God and guard it, they receive from the Prophet like unto Moses a sprinkling far more precious; the sprinkling of His own Blood: for they are taking their stand, as it were, by His side on Calvary.

There is the same thing to be noted about this second mark of fitness as about the first. No one can acquire it of himself. Like the mark of obedience, it is the fruit of the inworking of the Holy Spirit, Who so changes and moves the man, that at last he openly stands out as Christ's man; publicly upholding Him and His words; a cross-bearer faithful and true.

### b. 3.

#### LAMPS FOR THE SON OF MAN

*Beginning.* v. 30. And the Pharisees and their scribes murmured against His disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with the publicans and sinners.

*General.* G. 3:2:1. The Sun of righteousness—Rejoicing in the Light.

*Special.* xi. 29-36. The sign of Jonah; and the lamps.

There is the same kind of break here as there was in the account of the call of Levi. The man, whose career we have been following, drops out of sight; and in his place appear pupils of Christ, learning to use the gift of speech. They are not mentioned by name; nor, indeed, except at the outset, are they mentioned in any of these chapters upon their special training: but for all that, the seventy are always to be understood as being there receiving the instruction which their service demanded. The multitudes that came on the scene, gathering together unto Jesus, represented the many nations who were to go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, to have His way reported to them. Before them stood Jesus, the Prophet sent from God to teach them the laws and ways of His kingdom; and by His side, watching Him, and learning how to carry on this work for Him, were the seventy.

The kind of teaching which they were learning to give was that which Jesus had given at Bethsaida, when, after welcoming the multitudes, He spoke to them about the kingdom of God. His teaching was not meant to reach only a select few; but was that public teaching, free to all, which usually goes by the name of preaching: so that although they would always have to teach people individually when occasion arose, their work, as a rule, would be that of preachers. It was from instruction which Jesus gave them to fit them for that work, that the evangelist, in order to assure Theophilus of what he had been told about three great essentials for becoming a Teacher in the kingdom of God, chose the things found in this and the next two sections.

The seventy are being regarded here as if they were men who belonged to the school of Christ: that is, men who looked up to Him as the most perfect example of what a preacher should be, and modelled themselves upon Him; holding His views; teaching what He taught and as He taught it; reflecting Him as if they were mirrors. The account begins in the usual way, with a lesson upon Jesus as the Doer of this part of His work: a lesson which might be entitled, The preacher and his Model. In it they were shown what they had to be like in order to act for Him as the Prophet, the Proclaimer and Interpreter of the will of God.

It was to gain that knowledge that they had been eating and drinking with publicans and sinners at the feast in Levi's house. In the brief sketch of that scene which had been made for Theophilus, no portrait had been given him of the great central Figure, their Model; the Prophet Who preached to the multitudes and taught them about the kingdom of God. That missing part the evangelist now supplied by showing him Jesus, surrounded by the multitudes, teaching His pupils to know Himself in the office which He was filling, and to know the work of that office, so that they

might serve Him by becoming preachers of righteousness as He Himself was.

The name "preacher" requires for its proper use that there should be not only a speaker, but also people to whom he speaks; and the training for the office of preacher is not complete unless it takes into account the people who are to be reached by the preaching. Hence we find that when Jesus was teaching His pupils about Himself as filling the office of Preacher of righteousness, He also told them about the people to whom He was preaching; about the kind of preaching that He was giving, and its reception: thereby preparing them for dealing with those to whom they themselves would have to preach.

The seventy were by no means led to expect that it would be an easy matter to change people's views; to convince them of their errors; and to get them to walk faithfully and humbly according to the laws of God, and the standard which He had set. That vast congregation, thronging around the Preacher, saw no reason why they should change their ways. Even the words of Jesus had no influence over them: what Jesus told them had no weight with them. They wanted some striking evidence before they would admit that their ways were wrong, and that the way in which He told them to live was the true and the right one for them to follow as members of the kingdom of God. As we learn from the introduction to the chapter, what they wanted from Him was a sign from heaven; and the pupils of Christ who were being trained to come after Him, learned that such people were a worthless set. They wanted a token: but none would be given them but the sign of Jonah.

Jonah, the messenger of God from another land, coming to the Ninevites and telling them God's decrees, was a sign to them that their ways and doings were wrong; that God was displeased with them, and that they were to give up those ways, and do what His messenger told them.

In like manner the Son of man sent by God from another world, coming to those people and telling them God's decrees, was a sign to them that their ways were wrong; that God was displeased with them; and that they had to give up their old ways and do what His Messenger told them. The only sign that was given to the people of Nineveh that it was God Who was demanding the change in their ways, and that what they were being told to do was God's will, was the coming of Jonah the prophet to tell them. The only sign to the class of people represented by those thronging multitudes that it was God Who was requiring them to change their ways, and that what they were being taught was the will of God Himself, was the coming of the Son of man to tell them. The Son of man, as the Preacher of righteousness, was, for all ages, to be the sign to people of the living rule of God; the token to them that He requires them to turn from their own ways and live by His laws: and that sign was to be given by those who came after Him and, acting as His representatives, continued His work. They were to be signs to the people; signs for the Son of man; signs for God; and the way in which they were to serve as signs was by preaching as their Master preached.

The instruction which the seventy received about the sign of Jonah was thus an assurance to Theophilus of what he had been taught about the high place which preaching held in the kingdom of God. As we can see from the two points to which Jesus drew the attention of His pupils, what he had been taught about thus modelling himself upon the Son of man, and acting as His sign for God, bore upon the quality of the teaching given, and the preacher's aim in giving it.

The first point to which Jesus drew their attention was, that in the teaching which He gave when acting as a sign for God, He showed Himself to be greater than Solomon, who answered all the hard questions which the queen of

Sheba could ask him. Those who came after Him as signs for God, and taught the people for Him, would also have to be able to answer hard questions: they would have to be able to tell people about the kingdom of God, its laws and ways; and to give wise counsel to those who wanted to know how lives were to be lived in that kingdom. Teaching such as that is of the very highest order; and demands of those who give it great preparation and depth of study, careful weighing of words, and an untiring search for clearness and telling power. But as the Master Himself pointed out, men belonging to the type of people represented by the multitudes that thronged around Him do not care to come and hear such things. The wisdom of the kingdom of God has no attraction for them. It is not popular preaching. In spite of that, however, those who make Jesus their Model have to go on trying to give the same high quality of preaching which He gave, and to give it regardless of its unpopularity.

The next thing, which the Son of man pointed out to His pupils, was what the aim of their preaching should be. The aim of Jonah's preaching was to make the Ninevites turn from their disobedience to God, and follow His laws. The aim of the Son of man, their Model, was to make all the disobedient, wheresoever they were, turn from their evil ways and follow God's laws. Here again we find the same callousness amongst the hearers; the same warning to Christ's Instructors against expecting to sway crowds by their preaching, and get them to repent and change their ways. In the former case it was the men, who did not care to come and hear the teaching: now that they are being called upon to give up their own ways and follow the way of God, it is all, both men and women, all of this sign-seeking class of people who listen unmoved. But in spite of such numbers remaining unchanged, pupils of Christ still follow their Master's way of teaching and preaching: in spite of the fact that the public does not want the sign

which they are giving, they still go on witnessing for God and seeking to change the lives of people as their Master did, by giving them the sign of Jonah when he no longer fled from the presence of God.

Such was the pattern upon which pupils of Christ were modelled. But something more was needed before they would be in a position to speak for Him as the Light of the world. Jonah had had a God-given message to deliver, and those who came after the Son of man as signs for God would also have a God-given message to deliver. As shown by that scene upon the mount—when the three were with Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, and the cloud was overshadowing them—that God-given message was the will of God as made known by Jesus, and by Moses and the prophets as read by the light of the Sun of righteousness. The light thus given was not meant to be kept to themselves. It had to be shared with others. A lamp is lit, not for the sake of giving light to the lamp, but to lighten all around. And they were lamps, lit by Christ; lit by Him for use in His household to give light to all who entered.

Two kinds of lamps are referred to in the selections from the teaching of Jesus which form the rest of the section. The one mentioned in the first part, where He was telling His pupils the use that He intended to make of them, stands for the man himself, enlightened and enlightening. That which is spoken of in the last two parts, where He was teaching them how to become His lamps, refers to the eye; which, in a figure, acts as a lamp by receiving light from the things around, and enlightening the man about them. Speaking in the language of the parable, it is through the lamp of the eye that the man receives the light which he is to shed forth upon others as a lamp for Christ. Everything, therefore, depends upon the state of the man's "eye." The Sun of righteousness may be shining upon him in all His brightness, and yet no light be entering the man; the great Model of the Teachers may

be there before him, and yet he may fail to see what is being revealed to him. For any one to be able to see and receive the will of God as Jesus taught it, unaltered and entire; for any one to learn from Him what to be, what to teach and how to teach it, he must have a "single eye." To see things as they really are is the mark of the single eye: and it is when men can do that; when they have a clear, true knowledge of the will of God; when they see and know the laws and ways of His kingdom as taught by Christ and lived by Him, that they have the true light within them, and are in the way of becoming lamps for the Sun of righteousness, able to teach others for Christ. Such singleness of eye comes through the man's yielding himself to the Holy Spirit, Who leads servants of God into the truth.

"But when thine eye is worthless, thy body also is full of darkness." The word translated here as "worthless" is the same that Jesus used about people who would not be convinced unless they saw a sign. An eye is worthless when it does not see true; when, instead of seeing things as they are, the objects gazed at are altered, or blurred. When, for instance, the preacher misreads the office which Christ filled, and has given him to fill; when he misreads the teaching of Christ about the laws and ways of the kingdom of God, and sees the little things enlarged and the great things lessened; when he misreads the great aim of Christ's teaching; then his eye is worthless, and there is no light in that lamp of Christ. It is a state so easily fallen into, that the Master gave a personal warning to each of His pupils to take heed that the light that was in him was not darkness.

After having set all this before Theophilus, the evangelist sealed this part of his instruction by showing him the likeness of one whom Christ has made His lamp, a reflector of Himself. He is one whose eye is single, and in whom there is no dark place failing to shed light upon those around. His whole being is bright with the pure light

of the Sun of righteousness; light which he has received undimmed through the lamp of the single eye. It is a man like that who becomes God's sign to the disobedient; making known to them the laws and ways which God through Christ has decreed for His kingdom, and winning them to walk in those ways.

b. 4.

SINGLE-EYED

*Beginning.* v. 31. And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician; but they that are sick.

*General.* G. 4:2:1. By the word of truth.—Faithful. (The pupils who failed.)

*Special.* xi. 37-44. The reply to the Pharisee.

The opening words, "Now as He spake," show that what follows is connected very closely with the last section. When that section closed, Jesus was telling His pupils that two things were essential for becoming His lamps; they had to be single-eyed, and they had to have no part dark: and those two things, so briefly touched on then, form the subjects of His teaching in this section and the next.

The present section deals with the man and his work; with what he needs in order to be able to do it, and teach what Christ wants taught—the wisdom greater than that of Solomon. The proper handling of the work depends upon his having the first of the two essentials: the single eye.

The way in which the seventy were trained to be single-eyed is readily understood by turning to that part of the call of Levi with which this section has to do: the part where Jesus explained the presence of His pupils by telling the Pharisees who were standing aloof, that "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." A physician makes sick people whole by curing them of whatever is wrong with them; and Jesus made the seventy whole, and fit to teach for Him, by curing them of faults



which would have been fatal to them as Instructors. He put them right by turning them from what was wrong; and made them single-eyed by curing them of being evil, or worthless-eyed. By pointing out to them the bad effects of the worthless eye, He taught them both what to avoid, and what to be and do, in order to have that singleness of eye which is so necessary for being able to teach God's people aright.

The opening for the lesson was furnished by a Pharisee. The Pharisees were noted for their observance of two things: the rules for purification, and the law of tithes. Their sect was the mainstay of the national strictness about purification and tithing; and they impressed them upon the people both by precept and example. It was as teachers of holiness that they appeared in this scene. As usual with the Pharisees in this treatise, they served as types of what shepherds of God's people ought not to be; misguided observers of the laws and ways of His kingdom; men with a worthless eye.

The Pharisee had asked Jesus to dine with him; and Jesus had gone in and sat down at the table just as He was. And the Pharisee marvelled that He was not first baptized: for baptism before meals was one of their rules for purification. Some water was made to run down the hands of the guests by being poured upon them; and because running water carries away impurities, they were accounted clean.

The parts of the scene which are used in the lesson stand out very plainly: the Pharisee at the head of the table; before him, cups and platters, duly cleansed and filled with food; the purified guests in their places, all waiting to be fed. Then the astonishment of the host: for there, at the table, sat Jesus, the Teacher of righteousness, uncleansed. After all his care to keep himself pure, he was in danger of being defiled by feeding that unpurified Guest. And he marvelled that Jesus had not been baptized before dinner.

The evangelist began his account of what followed by telling Theophilus that it was the Lord Who spoke: in other words, that he was not to take the things which Jesus said as being merely an answer to the Pharisee, but as directions which, as the Master to His servants, He was giving to those whom He was training to serve Him. It is not likely that all the seventy were able to take advantage of the custom of the country, and range themselves around the room where the meal took place; nor indeed does the aim of the treatise require that we should so picture them: for the evangelist was not supplying Theophilus with a full account of the training of the whole band, but only with such well-chosen samples as would enable him to see clearly what their training was. To complete the scene, however, we must picture to ourselves members of the seventy as being amongst those who were looking on and listening.

As the Pharisee sat there marvelling, the food in the cup and the platter before him, and his guests waiting to be fed, Jesus took up His parable. Making use of the man and his surroundings, He taught His pupils how to do that which is spoken of in Is. 55, and supply, without money and without price, the spiritual food which is to be found in the word of God; so as to enable the ungodly and the lawless to change their ways, and return to Him of Whose goodness and mercy the prophet spoke.

He began by speaking about the vessels. As the change from "the outside of the cup and platter" to "your inward parts" plainly showed, those vessels represented men; men like the seventy whom He was training to act as His vessels and bear food to those who were hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Teachers of holiness have to be holy too; so He told them first of all about making the vessels pure.

The worthless eye takes a wrong view of what it is to be holy and undefiled. Like the Pharisees and their cleansing of the outside of the cup and the platter, it looks at the out-

ward man; and takes little or no heed of the inner man, the thoughts, feelings, and desires. Scrupulous about externals, those Pharisees were full of greed and the workings of evil; and were thus unfit to be teachers of righteousness. Any craving for wealth, or any hankering after evil, disables men from giving the teaching of Christ as He wants it given. To do that work properly, His Instructors need an unmercenary spirit, which seeks for no reward, which indulges in no thought of gain: a pure heart, which can be filled with the light of the Sun of righteousness, and can give itself up to the inworking of the Holy Spirit; a heart set on righteousness. To be God's vessels of righteousness, teachers of the laws and ways of the kingdom of their Maker, they have to be pure both outwardly and inwardly; keeping themselves unspotted from the world without, and from all evil within.

The work of the seventy, however, was not merely to talk of righteousness to godly people. They had to win over disobedient, misguided people, "publicans and others," who were living ungodly and lawless lives; living in ignorance and error. Their work would bring them face to face with wrong living of all sorts and degrees; and not only face to face with it, but would compel them to fix their minds upon it, so as to know and understand it; as well as to study thoroughly false doctrine, in order to be able to convince people, and win them to God's holy ways. From keeping such company, and letting the mind dwell upon what is wrong, defilement comes; and how would they be able to keep pure as He had just told them?

The answer is found in what Jesus said about the contents of the vessels. Speaking to those who, like the Pharisee, were afraid of becoming defiled by feeding an uncleaned guest, and reminding them apparently of Ps. 111: 9 (Sep. Ver.), the text upon which the doctrine of the purifying effects of almsgiving was based, He told them to give the food as alms, and then no defilement could come to them

through it. It was a parable, uttered for the sake of His pupils who were learning to become teachers of the laws and ways of the kingdom of God, and feed those who were hungry and thirsty through lack of righteousness. The things within them were the laws which God had promised to put into their minds, and write upon their hearts. These they were to preach freely to all; teach and explain them to those who understood them not: and, in spite of their contact with evil, they would remain undefiled. That saying of the Lord was as sure a guarantee of safety to them as Instructors, as the authority to tread on serpents and scorpions was to them as Welcomers. No defilement comes to servants of Christ from work which He gives them to do. At His command they can go where the wildest views of morality are held, and where the most dangerous errors prevail, heedless of the safety of their souls; sure that He Who sends them will keep them scatheless and unsoiled.

To have the wholeness, or soundness of mind, which an Instructor needs, a man must be able to grasp properly the laws and ways which he has to teach. Here again a worthless eye means unfitness for the work. The person who has it cannot see things as they are. They are out of proportion to him. Small things look large, and large things small; or else, mayhap, are passed over unnoticed. It was thus that the ailment showed itself in the Pharisees whose case Jesus used as an illustration. The payment of tithes had become, in their eyes, of such overwhelming importance that they scrupulously gave tenths of the smallest herbs; whilst, on the other hand, God's judgment and love they overlooked altogether.

"These," that is, God's judgment and love, "ye ought to have done." The expression is the same as that which was used in the last chapter in connection with mercy. In their teaching and preaching they had to do what the Pharisees had overlooked, and set forth the two great facts of God's judgment and His love: facts solemn and grand,

which have to be ever present with those who are acting for the Son of man as signs for God; an ever-present factor in their preaching. For they fail as Instructors, if they do not bring home to the hearts of their hearers the awful judgment of God which is bound to follow the breaking or neglect of His laws: and also if they do not bring home to them His great love for sinners; a love which is unceasingly seeking to get them to walk in those laws and live.

"And those ought not to be present." The well-being of the kingdom of God would require that, from time to time, rules of varying importance should be made for the guidance of its members; and there would always be a danger of such laws being treated as the Pharisees had treated the law of tithes, and being carried out to their minutest end. Against such misviews Instructors of Christ were guarded by having the tithing of mint, and rue, and every herb before their eyes, and hearing their Master's voice declare "Those ought not to be present."

The rest of the lesson follows the usual arrangement of these chapters upon their special training, and bears upon the lesson in corresponding part of the chapter upon their general training. In the account given him of that general training Theophilus had been told how Jesus rebuked His pupils who had failed; calling them an untrustworthy breed, and exclaiming "How long shall I be with you!" In these last two parts of the lesson he was shown the cause of their failure and of those remarks. Nothing is said about how they might have become able to do their work for Christ; the general training having made it so plain that the way was for them to be faithful to their Lord, and reap the benefits which come from being with Him.

The Pharisees were still being used as examples of teachers who fail; and the cause of their failure was still the worthless eye. They loved the chief seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market-places. They had that well-known disease of public speakers, the craving for

fame; the longing to be thought well of by the public. They sought fame in the church; and they sought it in the world. They looked for the praise of men, instead of the praise of God. That too comes from having a worthless eye. The man who has it looks away from his Lord, and looks to men for approval. The faithful preacher looks to his Master alone; cares only for His praise, and for His blame. There is no courting popularity by any preacher who has the single eye; no attention paid to itching ears. He cares only for what Christ thinks of his teaching. He teaches only what Christ wants taught; what He has sent him to teach. He is faithful to his Lord.

The Pharisees, with their laws of purification and strictness in fasting, were regarded by the people as living examples of the way in which God's laws should enter into the lives of men: how Jesus regarded them is shown by His words, "Woe unto you! for ye are as tombs which appear not, and men that walk over them know it not." In Numbers 19 we find that people were defiled by touching a grave; and that those who did not get purified from their defilement were cut off from the congregation. The men in the parable were properly amongst those who were thus cut off; for not knowing that they had touched a tomb, they would not get themselves cleansed: and the like fate would befall those who drew their knowledge of the way of righteousness from such people as the Pharisees. As far as their influence for good was concerned, men like the Pharisees were worse than useless. They were full of lifeless principles; and instead of the disobedient being turned by them to walk in the wisdom of the just, their case was made more hopeless than ever.

By this parable, those whom Jesus was training to be His Teachers were shown what they needed for being able to teach with a living power; uplifting, ennobling their hearers, and making them want to become what Jesus would have them be. Well versed in the law of God as the Phari-

sees were, through having the worthless eye which quenches the spirit, they had become like tombs; and what there was of it in them was dead. The knowledge of the letter of God's law was theirs; but the spirit of it did not live in them. To Instructors of Christ, the law of God had to be a living power, and their hearts filled with its life; but what that life was, and how they were to become full of it, is not so plain until we come to the corresponding part of their general training. The key to that training was given by the exclamation, "How long shall I be with you!" It was dwelling with Jesus. What they had needed for dealing with the case that had been brought to them came from being with Jesus. What Instructors need for dealing with the cases that come to them is also got by being with Jesus; and the means by which it is got is what He called the single eye. Those who have the single eye are full of light; for they see Him as He is, the perfect Example of God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven; they know, and understand His teaching; and what they learn of Him forms part of their very lives. Those who keep the word of Jesus with their whole heart can never be likened to tombs. They are what they seem to be: men whose whole being is given to Jesus, in whose hearts are His ways. And dwelling with Him, they grow so like their Lord, that the words which they speak are radiant with the beauty of the words of Jesus, mighty with their power; and the teaching which they give is full of wisdom divine, for they speak about what they know, the way of life of the perfect Man, the Pattern of the children of God, Who is with them, and is in them.

Such was the high standard of fitness for their work which Jesus set before those who were to teach for Him.

## b. 5.

## MEN OF GOD

*Beginning.* v. 32. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

*General.* G. 5:2:1. Meek.—Hindering none. (Forbidding the casting-out of devils.)

*Special.* xi 45-52. The woes on the lawyers.

This last section of the chapter deals with the teacher in his relationship to the taught; and shows how Jesus trained the seventy to treat the people whom they would be sent to instruct. The aim of their training was to get them to act as men of God should act; as Jonah ought to have acted when the Ninevites repented at his preaching. It was given in the same way as before. They were taught what they were to do, by being shown what they were not to do. Dark spots in other teachers were shown them; things that ruined their usefulness as guides to righteousness: and from Jesus' condemnation of them they learned that Instructors in the kingdom of God had to avoid those things and do the opposite, if the people were to be able to look to them as givers of the true light, without any part dark.

The lesson this time was furnished by the lawyers: men skilled in the law, who told the people what they would have to do if they would lead a godly life. The opening of it came through a remark made by one of them at the dinner: a remark whose use here connects the opening part of this section with the close of the former section. When he heard the Pharisees likened to tombs and condemned for their bad influence over people, he exclaimed, "Teacher, in saying this thou reproachest us also"; and thereby called forth those three woes upon the type of lawyer of that day which made up the lesson.

In His first woe, Jesus condemned those lawyers because they laded men with burdens grievous to be borne;



but they themselves would not touch those burdens with one of their fingers.

There is nothing in the Greek word for "burden" to show whether it is a heavy load or not. What it emphasizes is the fact that it is something which has to be carried from one place to another: presumably from the starting point where the load is put on, to the place where it is to be taken off. As a figure of speech, it stands for something which a person has to bear or do; something which he has to go on bearing or doing until his destination is reached, and the time has come for him to be released.

If we want to know about those burdens, what the guiding rule was to be for laying them on, and what the destination was which had to be reached in order to become free from them, we have only to turn to the account of Levi's feast; to that part where the pupils of Christ were being taught the great aim which they were always to have before them. It was the aim of their Master, "I came to call sinners to repentance": an aim fully attained when the disobedient were walking in the wisdom of the just. The people upon whom burdens would be laid were the disobedient seeking to return and walk in the laws of the Lord. They had to pass from ways of disobedience to the path of the wisdom of the just; from wrong doing to right doing: and the burden laid upon them was what they had to undergo, or do, until that destination was reached, and they stood on the way which is called the wisdom of the just.

It was in the laying on of such burdens that those lawyers had failed. There was a dark part in them; and the cause of the darkness was the absence of that great aim of Christ's teaching. They gave no thought or care to the lack of moral strength in people who had gone astray: they had no sympathy for them. Not only did they make the return hard for them by lading them with burdens grievous to be borne, but they gave them neither help nor encouragement. The preacher may have won the people's hearts; but

he has failed as a Teacher for Christ if he stops or delays their reformation by the things which he requires of them as necessary for their return. A good Teacher lays upon people only such things as will help them in their reformation, and will enable them to take their stand firmly upon the path of righteousness.

What he needs for doing this is the first part of what is said in Ps. 24: 8 (Sep. Ver.) about the Lord Whose work he is doing: "Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will He make laws for sinners in the way." The first great qualification is to be "chrestos," good. It is the word which Christ Himself used to describe the way in which the Most High deals with the unthankful and the evil, and which so well describes His own way also. Kindness, goodness in dealing with wrong-doers who are seeking to do right, the kindness and goodness of the Father Himself, has to be the rule of the man who would be a good Teacher for Christ, a successful guide to godliness; a kindness which shows itself in the kind of burden which is laid upon the returning sinner, in the wise and profitable giving of help and encouragement, and in the wanderer's safe and speedy return to the path of godliness.

Thus this first dark spot in Teachers is caused by their losing sight of the aim of Christ the Teacher. It is changed to light when that aim is kept steadfastly in view, and the goodness of Christ shines bright in their treatment of the penitent.

The rest of the section enlarges as usual upon the corresponding part of their general training; that which was connected with the forbiddal of the man who was casting out devils in Jesus' name. Pride and self-assertion had been at the root of that deed. Lack of meekness had warped their judgment, and kept them from rightly understanding what the will of God was which He had made known to them through Christ about their place and work in His kingdom; lack of meekness had made them go astray, and

stop the man who was helping in their work of warring against evil. Christ's condemnation had taught them that both the deed itself was wrong, and all that had led to it; and that for them to be able to form a true judgment of what God's will about His kingdom was, and to be able to show people how to carry out His will, they had to have meekness. His woes upon the lawyers made that plainer still; for they illustrated the truth of the rule laid down of old, "The meek will He guide in judgment; the meek will He teach His ways." Ps. 24: 9 (Sep. Ver.)

As before, they were taught to do right by being shown what was wrong; only this time it was by means of the doings of others, and not of themselves. Their own bad points were shown them, faithfully reproduced in others. The blot which had shown itself in their conduct as Helpers, appeared as a "dark part" in those teachers of the law, making them useless as lamps for Christ. The pride of office which had blinded their eyes, showed itself in the well-known pride which those lawyers had in their own learning, and in their skill in deciding what should, or should not be done. Instead of the command, "Forbid not," which had marked Jesus' disapproval of their conduct in stopping the work of a man who was in reality their fellow-labourer for God, there were the woes pronounced upon those teachers of Israel for destroying the work of men whom God had sent to make His will known.

Two sets of people are affected by deeds such as that of forbidding the man who was casting out devils in Jesus' name: the workers, and those for whose good they are working. These Jesus took in turn, and by showing what kind of treatment of them is a sign of darkness in teachers of the will of God, taught His pupils how to act as men of God should act.

First they learned how lack of meekness in Christ's Instructors would show itself in their treatment of workers. The way was the same as that in which it had shown itself

in them when they were Helpers. It had made them stop the work of a man who, like themselves, was warring against evil: and it made those teachers of God's will stop the work of the prophets, men whom He had sent to make His will known. Those lawyers (types of the teachers whom Christ condemned), made a dead letter of the laws and ways of the kingdom of God as taught by the prophets in the Old Testament: for that is what building their tombs signifies; hiding the knowledge of God's will which He had sent those prophets to give; interpreting their messages in such a way that they no longer had any living power in them; setting them aside as belonging to the dead past. So strongly did Jesus condemn this destruction of the life's-work of the prophets, that He held the behaviour of the class of teachers who were guilty of it to be as bad as that of the men who had tried to stop the spread of the knowledge of God's will by murdering His messengers. Their treatment of the prophets was a sign of a "dark spot" in those teachers of the law. It made them unfit to be lamps for Christ; for it made them unable either to receive or to give the light which God has shed upon His will in the Old Testament.

Important as the light of the Old Testament is, it forms only part of the knowledge with which men have to be filled in order to be good light-givers for Christ, able to tell people about the kingdom of God, and to show them how to do His will on earth as it is being done in heaven. The fulness of that light comes from Jesus. He left no written records; but made use of men to proclaim and interpret the things which He revealed; and from those men His Teachers have to receive them. That is why the evangelist in satisfying Theophilus about the instruction he had received, not only showed him how the messages of those whom God had sent of old had to be treated, but also the messages of those whom Jesus of Nazareth would send.

The messengers whom Jesus would use for making

known His will about the kingdom of God were "prophets and apostles," members of the two orders called in these notes Spokesmen and Envoys; the orders which have to decide upon the interpretation of the law of God, and upon what the laws and ways of His kingdom are. As the references to Abel and Zachariah showed, their messages for Jesus would cover the whole of the work of those two orders: for Abel's message to mankind through the sacrifice of the firstling of his flock foreshadowed the message of God's mercy through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, the proclaiming of which formed the first part of the Spokesmen's work dealt with by the evangelist; whilst Zachariah, standing above the people and rebuking them, represented the last part of the work assigned in this treatise to the highest order, the Envoys of Christ: so that from Abel to Zachariah included the whole of what Jesus committed to those two orders. In that awful saying about their blood, the members of both orders are included amongst those called prophets;—the Old Testament general name for men who bear a message from God.

Teachers of the stamp represented by those lawyers would not be open to conviction; but would treat the men whom Jesus would send in much the same way as their predecessors had treated the Old Testament prophets. Their object would be the same: to put a stop to the messages. The mouths of some they would close altogether in death; others they would try, by persecution, to keep from proclaiming their message: thus bringing down upon themselves the same dreadful judgment which was pronounced upon those who built the tombs of the prophets. That judgment was upon all teachers of the type of those lawyers: men who, by their teaching, would destroy any of the messages of Jesus, or would stop their spread. Of them would be required the blood of all the prophets shed from the foundation of the world.

Such was the way in which this dark part would show

itself in connection with the revelation of God's will about His kingdom. For Instructors of Christ to have no part dark and be true light-givers, able to speak wisdom greater than the wisdom of Solomon, they must receive the messages of the prophets and apostles whom Christ has sent like those of the prophets of old, as God's own revelation of His will about His kingdom. It was this that the evangelist was pointing out to Theophilus when he spoke of Jesus as the Wisdom of God. That expression not only meant that the laws and ways of the kingdom of God as taught by the messengers of Jesus were to have the same high authority as the revelation of God's will through those who are usually known as prophets; but also that what they made known was the deliberate decree of the All-wise, the Creator and Ruler of all things. What "the Wisdom of God," decreed as to the way in which the kingdom of God should be ruled, the way in which the members of that kingdom were to live, or the way in which the laws already given were to be applied, no wisdom of man could ever improve upon; nor could any part of it be altered, or annulled, without inflicting injury and loss upon that kingdom.

The messages of the prophets before the time of Christ are found in the Old Testament. Those of the prophets and apostles whom Christ promised to send are to be found in the New Testament, and in that great mass of unwritten knowledge preserved in the Church. Together they furnish the source of the teaching about the laws and ways of the kingdom of God which Christ's Spokesmen, as teachers of the people, have to get them to see and follow.

The last woe had to do with the second part of the sign of Jonah; that of winning people to repentance. The aim of preaching is to turn the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to give them the knowledge of the will of God, and teach them how to live by it. There is, as it were, a pathway along which people must walk, if they are to do God's will on earth as it is being done in heaven. Those

who tread that path journey through a brightness, ever increasing, into the perfect light; for it is the path of righteousness, lit by the Sun of righteousness. At its entrance stands a door which has to be opened for each one to enter; and the preacher's work is to open that door. The key by which it is opened is the preaching of the prophets: the key which the lawyers had taken away when they built the tombs of the prophets, and buried their God-given messages; thereby stopping the penitent who were seeking to enter and walk in the wisdom of the just.

The personal element is again very prominent. Hindering others from entering in this pathway of knowledge followed upon the fact that the lawyers themselves did not enter it. Helping others to enter can only be effectually done when the teachers enter it themselves. Those who are really acting for the Sign from heaven are themselves going the way along which they ought to be leading their people. They are earnest learners; followers of the way of God's laws; pilgrims heavenward. Walking in the path of righteousness themselves, their unceasing aim is to lead people God-wards, both by telling them, and showing them, how to live by His laws. Such men are men of God, both "good and righteous."

#### c. 1.

#### CHRIST'S MEN

xi. 53-xii. 3. As pointed out by the opening words, "When He was come out from thence," the training which follows is a sequel to that which was given in the Pharisee's house. The first part has to do with that which was furnished by the Pharisees: by their views of holiness; the stress which they laid upon legal trifles; their passing over the great things of which Jesus spoke; and the fact that they were not what they professed to be. It upheld the instruction Theophilus had received, by showing him clearly that such men were not fit to be Instructors, because they

were not Christ's men. This it did by testing them by the two rules which went with the second mark of fitness, "He that is not with Me is against Me," and "He that gathereth not with Me scattereth;" so that it is also an illustration of the second section of the chapter.

The Pharisees were still being used to represent unworthy teachers. On this occasion, as the mention of the scribes shows, they were posing as guardians of the law, seeking to unmask and convict those who were breaking it. Under colour of being defenders of the truth they attacked Jesus; their real reason being that His teaching clashed with their teaching of the law of God, and His rules for teachers of righteousness bore heavily upon them. Their mode of attack was to try to confuse Him by raining questions upon Him; lying in wait for Him to contradict Himself, or to say things which were not in agreement with the law of God as taught by Moses and the prophets. Their aim was evidently to undermine the authority of His teaching by showing that His claim to be speaking by the Spirit of the Lord was worthless, because He contradicted Himself; and that His rulings, being variable, could not form part of the unchangeable law of God. That fierce attack upon the great Teacher of God's will by those who claimed to be also teachers of it, showed Theophilus how the saying of Jesus, "He that is not with Me is against Me," would apply to such people. Christ's men, those who are with Him, are the direct opposite of those Pharisees. They never go against the teaching of Jesus; never belittle their Lord.

It was an extreme case; showing in all its blackness the position really taken by those who are not wholly at one with Jesus in His teaching about the kingdom of God, and warning His pupils what they themselves had to expect. The attack on the Master goes on through His servants; and all who take up their cross and serve Him in this work of teaching, have also to bear their share of such attempts



to entrap them in their speech by men of the class represented by those Pharisees.

Next came the rule, "He that gathereth not with Me scattereth." In the scene set before Theophilus, the Pharisees were still there; but now there came to the front multitudes of people, gathered together in their thousands, insomuch that they trode one upon another. Those multitudes represented the gathering that Jesus was making; that in which His Teachers were to take part with Him. As before, the Pharisees were types of worthless teachers; men who kept people out of the kingdom of God instead of gathering them into it; men who were like tombs that appear not. There was some deadening influence within them which affected their whole being, all that they were, and did, and said; making them useless for establishing the kingdom of God. That fatal influence was hypocrisy. What they taught in public about the kingdom of God, in private they neither believed, nor held. That in itself would be quite enough to make teachers cease from gathering with Christ, and to dishearten that eager throng; and against that hypocrisy Jesus now warned the pupils whom He was training to be Instructors of the people.

Their private treatment of the laws and ways of the kingdom of God was bound to show itself in their public speaking. In spite of all their efforts to keep them secret, the opinions which they held, and the views which they privately expressed, would become known, and their work for Christ be undone. Perfect sincerity has to mark those who would gather with Christ, and, by their preaching and teaching, turn the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just: the sincerity of those who are really Christ's men; who always, as in His sight, uphold the word of God which He taught, and as He taught it, using it as He used it, treating it as He treated it.

## c. 2.

## MEN OF GOD

xii. 4-12. The second part is a sequel to the training furnished by the lawyers. Those who were being trained are no longer spoken of as pupils; but are treated as men whose course of training has come to an end, and are about to set out as God's servants to instruct people in the laws and ways of His kingdom. They are now friends of Jesus: a title which accounts for the name given to the person whose training the treatise established—Theophilus, a friend of God.

When Jesus called them His friends, He was speaking to them as to men who had been taken into His fullest confidence, and knew Him and His ways, and what He wanted people to be and do: men who were one with Him in heart and mind. He was sending them as His messengers to teach people to know and follow the will of God; and in order to uphold and strengthen them against the attacks which would be made upon them, He gave them both warnings and encouragements. What was told them was based upon the solemn fact, that it was God's will that they would have to teach; the laws and ways of God's kingdom as revealed in the law, in the prophets, and in the teaching of Jesus. It was upon the relationship of themselves and their message to God Himself that those warnings and encouragements bore; so we find that there are three pairs of them, one in connection with each of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. By that teaching of Jesus about the Godhead, the instruction which Theophilus had received was upheld.

As friends of Jesus they too would be attacked by unworthy teachers as He had been by the lawyers. Pressure would be brought to bear upon them to stop their teaching and silence their message, as had been done to the prophets of old. Bodily harm, even death itself, would menace them;

and there was a danger that fear of men would make them shrink from staunchly upholding the word committed to them. Against that fear Jesus warned them; guarding them against it by means of a greater fear, the fear of God the Father in Whose kingdom they were serving, Whose power extends beyond the grave. But with the warning He also gave them something to strengthen them: the encouraging knowledge that even the sparrows, whose lives were held so cheaply by men, were under God's unfailing care. Much more therefore would they themselves be who were the friends of His Son.

Another influence that would be used for silencing them as teachers of righteousness was the dread of shame; the dread of being despised, or thought strange, if they sided with Jesus of Nazareth, and spoke for Him. Against that they had already been warned when told about taking up their cross; but now that they were entering upon their duties as cross-bearers, Jesus spoke more plainly still. The expression which He used was very peculiar. The word translated "confess" means "to speak together, to speak one language, to agree with": so that what He said may be freely rendered, "Every one who shall agree with Me before men, the Son of man shall also agree with him before the angels of God."

It is not hard to understand what is meant by their agreeing with Jesus before men, nor why He should have made it of such importance. The striving against the laws of God as taught by Jesus is strong and unceasing. Men find His rendering of them stricter than they care to follow: but in spite of that, His friends have to proclaim and uphold His decrees in their fulness, regardless of the arguments of the learned, regardless of the customs of the world; regardless of all who seek, for various causes, to have the standard lowered. What their Master decreed, His servants insist upon unchanged.

Nor is it hard to understand what is meant by "the Son

of man shall agree with them before the angels of God." It is another form of the promise which was made them as Welcomers, "He that heareth you, heareth Me," and "Your names are written in heaven"; and uplifts Christ's Teachers high above the thoughts of what men may think and say: uplifts them into the presence of the angels of God, the holy beings who so faithfully carry God's messages and announce His will. There, before the angels of God, they are recognized by the Son of man as being His own word-bearers, angels of the Son of God.

By warning, as well as by encouragement, Jesus helped His servants to be true to their trust. His warning this time was against something which would shut them out altogether from the glorious company of which He had just spoken. That fatal thing was disowning the Son of man in the face of men: a shameful thing for His friends to do. It is not usually called disowning Jesus; but by whatsoever name it goes, it may always be known by a backwardness in insisting upon Jesus' rendering of the laws of God being the unchangeable rule of life and conduct in His kingdom, and a willingness to accept instead the views and rulings of men. Christ's Instructors have to be ready at any time to stand alone, and proclaim His words unaltered in the face of all men; bowing to the ruling of none but the Lord Whose badge they wear. "He that disowneth Me in the presence of men shall be utterly disowned in the presence of the angels of God."

So precious was the trust committed to them, that Jesus brought to bear upon those who were to guard the law of God, the great awe of the fear of each Person of the sacred Trinity. The power by which the tongue of the dumb was loosened was the power of the Spirit. It is by the power of the Holy Ghost that men's tongues are loosened to speak for God it is by the gifts of the Holy Ghost that they are fitted to become Instructors for Christ; and it was by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost that the word of

God came which they have to teach and to guard. Their becoming speakers at all depends upon the Holy Ghost; the faithful carrying out of their trust depends upon their living faith in Him. Jesus had already taught them the folly of thinking that any other power but that of the Holy Ghost could fit men for His work. What He now guarded them against was any weakening of their faith in the presence of the Holy Ghost within them. Only extreme cases of failure are given; but, as usual, they are to be regarded as covering all of less degree. What they were now told taught them that never were any of them to dare to slight, much less disown, the inspiration and power of the Holy Ghost with regard to the word of God and their office as Instructors. Speaking against the Son of man may be forgiven; but blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, never.

The encouragement which went with this terrible warning was also very great; for it was the promise of perfect peace of mind in times of trial. Proclaiming the laws and ways of the kingdom of God as given by Jesus would bring them into conflict with all other powers, ecclesiastical and civil; with those who ruled according to the traditional views of the Old Testament, and those who ruled by man-made laws; and they would have to answer for the stand they took. But there would be no call for the friends of Christ to suffer any of that wearing anxiety about what they should answer, or what they should say, which always goes with such trials; for the Holy Ghost, Who was with them, and in them, would teach them at the trial itself what they ought to say: and in like manner, would guide them at all times when they were called upon to answer for their teaching.

## CHAPTER J.

ST. LUKE XII. 13-48.

(a). xii. 13-15. (b). 16-40. (c). 41-48.

(a).

13-15. And one of the multitude said unto him, Master, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me. But he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

(b). 1.

16-21. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my corn and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night they require thy life of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

2.

22-28. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. For the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment.

Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have

no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit unto his age? If then ye are not able to do even that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest?

Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass in the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more shall he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

## 3.

29-32. And seek not ye what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Howbeit seek ye his kingdom, and these things shall be added unto you.

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

## 4.

33, 34. Sell that ye have, and give alms.

Make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

## 5.

35-40. Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall come and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.

## (c). 1.

41-44. And Peter said, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all? And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath.

## 2.

45-48. But if that servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the unfaithful. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more.



## CHAPTER J. XII. 13-48.

### HEALERS

a. xii. 13-15. b. 16-40. c. 41-48.

*Beginning of Training.* v. 33-39. Sons of the bride-chamber.

*General Training.* Chap. G. First sub-division of the third part of each section.

a.

xii. 13-15. *Introduction.* The scene, which the evangelist has made the opening of the chapter, is a sequel to the closing scene of the last chapter. The same people are all there: Jesus, the seventy, and the great multitude. The place filled by the multitude is still that of the many nations who would go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and be told His way; but now they are regarded as being in the next stage, and standing in need of help to carry out their great resolve, and walk in the way of God. The training of the seventy is still going on; but now it has to do with the next part of Christ's work at Bethsaida, that of healing those who had need of healing: and it was as the Messenger of God, sent by Him "to set at liberty them that are bruised," that He stood there ready to help the multitude. The part of the labourers' prayer that went with this work was, "Deliver us from evil."

The words by which this part of the commission of Jesus was described, were taken from Isaiah 58:6 (Sep. Ver.), "Loosen every bond of injustice, untie the knots of hard bargains, set at liberty them that are bruised, and

cancel every unjust account": deeds that would bring about a state of peace and happiness such as that intended by the year of jubilee, when the people of God were to be set free from all that bound and oppressed them, and restored to the inheritance which He had given them; free, once more, to live the life which He meant His people to live. There, ready to set them free, stood Jesus; and by His side the pupils whom He was training to carry on that good work for Him, and make of them people fit for the presence of God.

There was something different about this part of their service for Christ. With regard to the other parts of His work, at the time when Theophilus was being instructed, the Atonement had been made, the release to captives proclaimed, and Spokesmen had but to repeat that proclamation; the recovering of sight to the blind had also been proclaimed, and everything that men need know about the will of God had been taught by the Son of man, and Spokesmen had only to repeat that teaching: but in this case, instead of a proclamation to repeat, it was work to complete, work which had been given to Jesus as the Christ to do, but which would not be done until everything that bruised the children of God had been overcome; so that His Spokesmen would have to press on unceasingly, ever striving to conquer more foes for their absent Lord, and to make His people ready for the time when He would come in His glory as the Son of God. Thus it was that in the former chapters their training had been to fit them to speak for Him as He was seen on earth; in this, to fit them to work for Him as He is in heaven.

The man, grasping at an earthly inheritance as if it were upon that that his well-being depended, furnished the starting point for the outline of this new training. He wanted Jesus to complete His teaching about the kingdom of God by putting it into practice and bidding his brother to divide the inheritance with him.

By saying that he was "one out of the multitude," the evangelist showed that he was to be regarded as giving voice to the popular idea of what the kingdom of God should be like, and what God's servants represented. Briefly put, it was that each should have his fair share of the earth, and of the things of the earth; and that it was the duty of Jesus to see that he had it. Coming as it did directly after the training which Jesus had been giving to His Spokesmen about teaching people the laws and ways of the kingdom of God, the demand which the man made of the Teacher expressed the view that the practical aim of those laws was the bettering of the social conditions of life; that a just distribution of wealth would ensure a general uplifting of the masses; and that it was the duty of the great Teacher and His followers to use their influence to that end.

The seventy learned, however, that the office of judge and divider of property was not one of the offices of the Christ; and that the duties of such an office had no place amongst the duties of His Spokesmen. They were not being trained to help God's people into an earthly inheritance, but a heavenly; and the way in which they were to do it was to set the bruised at liberty in the way in which their Master did.

A very full account had already been given Theophilus about this part of the work of the Christ. He had been told how Jesus likened it at Nazareth to the work of Elisha, the prophet who healed Naaman of the plague-spot which was marring his life; and how at Capernaum He had given evidence of His authority to do it by setting a man free from the spirit of an unclean devil to which he was in bondage. He had also been shown the vast range of the work by the great multitudes of people who had come to be healed of their infirmities; and he had been taught that none need come in vain: for all that had need of healing Jesus healed. A sample too had been given him. Like the healing of the

man in the synagogue at Capernaum, it also was an extreme case,—that of the boy completely helpless in the grasp of the spirit of an unclean devil:—for servants of Christ had to know that they would be able to deal with the worst cases that would ever exist, and that there would be no evil influence too strong for them to overcome, no infirmity too awful for them to heal. “The greater includes the less”; and the healing of the man’s son covered the curing of every bad influence to which they might yield; the healing of every weakness of character, of every failing, which might mar their lives as children of God.

There was no need, therefore, for anything more to be said about the nature of the work; so the evangelist in this chapter has confined himself to the personal training of the men who were to do it: laying special stress, as in the two foregoing chapters, upon the kind of men they had to be. He forecast this in the introduction by showing Theophilus how Jesus drew attention to the scene before them, and told them to do two things: to take notice of it, and to keep themselves from all covetousness. Then came the maxim which furnished the key to this part of their training; “A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

The life which they would have to cherish was independent of earthly possessions. Its well-being depended upon what a man was, and not upon what he had; and it was strengthened, not by making up for him what he lacked in wealth, but what he lacked in character and spiritual power. They were to “make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him,” not by putting them in possession of the things of the earth, but by putting them in possession of themselves, by strengthening them to overcome their failings. Their work, in short, was, by the grace of God, to deliver people from evil, so that they would be able to do His will on earth as it is being done in heaven. It was the crown of their work as the Sanhedrin of the kingdom of God that

they were being trained to do; the grand work of uplifting the human race by enabling people to live in the highest and noblest state of well-being possible here on earth, so that when their Lord returned as the Bridegroom, He would find them all living as people ought to live in the kingdom of God.

Reviewing what Theophilus had so far been told about the duties of those Spokesmen of Christ, we see that the people whose safe-keeping and perfecting would be entrusted to them were people whom the Helpers, as Fishers of men, had gathered in for their Master. That gathering-in was completed at Baptism, when their converts began their new life in the kingdom of God strengthened by what Jesus had foreshadowed by His command that "something be given her to eat." It was that life which formed the great trust committed to Spokesmen of Christ; and it was for its preservation and development that they were being trained. As the Physician of souls, He had taught them about cleansing and restoring it when corrupted by sin. As the Teacher of righteousness, He had trained them to guide into the way of righteousness those who possessed that life, and thus provide it with the only conditions in which it could flourish. And now as the Perfecter of the people of God, He was training them to remove all obstacles to its full development by enabling its possessors to live as God meant people to live in His kingdom.

The path of creation goes ever upwards, mounting upon sacrifice; and it is its great law, the sacrifice of the lower for the good of the higher, that is being set forth in this training of men to uplift the human race. The earthly has to be sacrificed for the sake of the heavenly; the temporal for the spiritual; the lower nature crushed and the higher cherished by all who would rise, but especially by those whose place it is to lead the way heavenward. How deeply it enters into the life of Spokesmen can be judged from the outline of their training which this chapter contains.

The arrangement of the chapter is the same as that of the other two chapters upon their special training. In each section, their early instruction—that which had been given them as sons of the bridechamber of Christ—is first continued; and then the general instruction contained in chapter G is enlarged upon. The five sections are also formed into two groups; the first of which is made up of the first two sections, and shows what kind of man a Healer of infirmities should be; whilst the second group, consisting of the last three sections, treats of the qualifications which are specially needed for the work.

*Summary.* An unworldly thread runs through all that the evangelist has set before Theophilus; for men who were to be channels of God's grace, fellow-workers with the Holy One of God, had to be very unselfish, and very unworldly. How unselfish they were to be was shown him by the parable of the rich fool; whilst the directions about not taking thought even for things necessary for their bodily life showed him how thoroughly the command to guard themselves against all covetousness had to be carried out by those who take part in Christ's work of healing.

What was needed for doing the work is briefly described in the last three sections. They were to be followers of the Son of God; taking as their standard of well-being life in the kingdom of God, and going forward seeking it, sure of success. Their great aim was to be suppliers of strength to the weak; winners of treasures such as that which the father had won when his son was healed, and restored to him by Jesus. Their behaviour that of true servants of the Bridegroom looking for the coming of their Lord, ready for the coming of the Holy One of God.

The two parables which close the chapter deal with these last two requirements of servants of the Bridegroom, and show how they affect them as stewards: the first giving a picture of a faithful and wise steward; the second of one

who ceased to look for his lord's return, and so became unworthy of his stewardship.

b. 1.

UNSELFISH

*Beginning.* v. 34. Can ye make the sons of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

*General.* G. 1:3. Givers for Christ. (The twelve giving up their store of food.)

*Special* xii. 16-21. The rich fool.

The chapter starts, as usual, with the kind of man that Jesus wanted; the description of the first mark of fitness being completed by the story of the rich fool. Before relating it, the evangelist told Theophilus that it was a parable: in other words, that it was to be taken as applying to another state of things than that of which it spoke. In itself it was a crushing rebuke of a man's folly in making the welfare of his own life his main care, and selfishly hoarding up the things of earth: but as a parable it applied to people rich in spiritual things; such good things as are daily received from Christ by the sons of His bridechamber, —the riches of His grace; and it was against being selfish in spiritual things that it now warned the seventy.

Spiritual gifts are not meant to be selfishly stored up by the person upon whom they are poured. They are meant, of course, to be used for himself; but not for himself alone. It was there that the man in the parable went wrong. His great aim was his own well-being. To that he was devoting himself; and for that he was gathering in the good gifts of God and so carefully storing them up. His own future was his only care; and, as the parable plainly shows, the man who lives thus for himself is a failure, a foolish person unfit for this service of Christ. No one who eats his morsel alone is fit for the work of helping the weaknesses of others; no one who lives for his own soul alone. The first great essential for becoming a Healer of men is unselfishness; and

unselfishness too about spiritual things. The man who would come after Christ in this great work of uplifting humanity by helping people to overcome failings which by themselves they cannot overcome, helping them to live as children of God, must be one to whom doing good to others has become a second nature; one who cannot receive any blessing from God without wanting others to share in it also.

The parable closes with the verdict, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God." How people can be rich towards God has already been shown in the feeding of the five thousand; when the twelve, having received their little store of food from Jesus blessed by Him, gave freely of it to the fainting multitudes. They treated it as if they were Christ's stewards, entrusted with it by Him for the good of others; and the man who is rich towards God treats in the same way the spiritual gifts which he receives. He seeks to share with others whatever treasures of the knowledge of God's word there may be given him; whatever graces; whatever he finds strengthening for his own weaknesses, thereby showing that he has that unselfishness which is one of the secrets for becoming a healer of men.

b. 2.

UNCAREFUL

*Beginning.* v. 35. But the days will come; and when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then will they fast in those days.

*General.* G. 2:3. Followers of the suffering Christ.

*Special* xii. 22-28. Anxiety about their livelihood.

There were two ways of treating the story of the rich fool: one as a parable; the other as a simple tale, teaching a plain lesson from everyday life. Its teaching as a parable had served to show Theophilus about the first of the two marks of fitness for becoming a servant of the Healer of



mankind, and helping people to overcome their weaknesses; whilst the lesson which Jesus drew from the plain, literal meaning which it had when He uttered it as a warning to the crowd against the man's graspingness, now served to show him about the second of those marks.

The lesson to the seventy which was illustrated by it was, "Keep yourselves from all covetousness." Being covetous does not depend upon the quantity grasped at. Even followers of Him Who had not where to lay His head, men living upon the doles of the charitable, can be slaves to covetousness, and have their usefulness ruined by grasping for more, although the things they are seeking are the bare necessities of life: and to them too the story of the rich fool comes as a warning.

But there was something more than the ordinary uncertainty of life that made the warning to the rich fool apply so personally to those who had resolved to come after Christ that He began the next part of their lesson with "Therefore I say unto you"; and that was that the disposal of the man's life lay in the hands of others. "This night they require thy life of thee." As Spokesmen of Christ they might at any time have work given them to do which would take them away from a place "which brought forth plentifully," and would set them down in one where they could not even be sure of the necessities of life, food and clothing; so that the risk of finding themselves in the uncertain position of the rich fool was unceasingly theirs. The mark of fitness was therefore something which would guard them against his mistake, and thus keep them from being made unfit to take part in Christ's work of healing.

The outward sign of this fitness was the absence of all anxiety about the necessities of life: not the state of mind which springs from recklessness and improvidence, but that which grows from the strong, deep trust in God which is, in reality, the true mark of this fitness.

The state of affairs which could make absence of anxiety

so remarkable that it was chosen by the Lord to be a mark of fitness for His service, was one that would not fall to the lot of all men; for it belonged to those who had answered the call of Christ, and had offered themselves for His work; men who had been set apart for the service of the Healer of mankind. It was the state in which the sons of the bridechamber found themselves when the bridegroom was taken away from them, and they were left dependent upon the charity of those who loved him, and tried to uphold the honour of his name: and it was also the state of the cross-bearer as he followed his leader, with no means of subsistence but such as came from friends and admirers of his forsaken master. Yet in spite of their lot being such as this represented, Spokesmen of Christ were to have no anxiety. They were neither to be anxious about their life, whether they would have food enough; nor yet about their body, whether they would have sufficient clothing.

The test went down to their very thoughts and feelings. They had to be thoroughly unmindful of themselves. Those who could not help being anxious about their own needs were unfit to be helpers of the weaknesses of others. The men for that work were those who gave way to no anxious thoughts, to no worry or care, about either means of subsistence or comfort of the body; men uncaredful of their own needs; free to devote themselves wholly to the needs of others.

A state of mind like that is not a natural state. It comes from a genuine trust in God's unfailing care; and the rest of the section shows how Jesus helped His pupils to have that great trust in God of which the second mark of fitness is the fruit and outward sign.

He made them apply to themselves the lesson drawn from the rich fool's mistake; and apply it as men who had given themselves, their souls and bodies, to Him for the service of God. The word usually translated "soul" in the story of the rich fool, has also the meaning of "life"; and

now that that story is being taken literally, it is the meaning which is being given to it: so that in applying it we may say, that Jesus was speaking to them as to men who had devoted their lives and bodies to the service of God.

Those lives were the lives of men who had become sons of the bridechamber, and were serving the Bridegroom; the bodies were those of men who had become followers of the crucified Saviour of mankind: and it was as applying to the lives and bodies of such servants of God in Christ that the lesson was given them. If they could trust God with the care of the greater, they could surely trust Him also with the care of the less. And "the life," He reminded them, "is more than the food, and the body than the raiment." They had trusted God with the care of their lives and bodies when they gave themselves to Him; surely they ought also to be able to trust Him to provide the food and clothing which those lives and bodies required for His service.

Speaking to them first as sons of the bridechamber, He taught them that they, above all, had no excuse for anxiety about their lives, or the support of their lives. "Consider the ravens": the birds noted for their long lives. They give no care to the future; and yet, for all that, they live on and on: for God unceasingly feeds them; and all through their great length of days His care never fails them. Sons of the bridechamber of Christ are of more value to God than birds, and the lives of servants of the Bridegroom more worthy in His eyes of support.

The folly of being anxious about their lives was made very plain by the fact, that no amount of thoughtfulness on their part could lengthen the allotted span of life: or, as Jesus put it—still warning them against "covetousness," or reaching out and grasping for more—no one by being anxious could reach out and grasp even one short-armed length of life, and add it to his age. Their whole life, its daily

bread, its length of days, was in the hands of God. To Him, therefore, let them trust it.

Neither were they to be anxious about their bodies whether they would be able to clothe them properly, or not; for anxiety about that would likewise brand them as being unfit to help the infirmities of others. In this also they were helped by the Master to conquer themselves, and become fit for His service; and once more He helped them by lifting them up above the little things which were so likely to wreck them. Their bodies they had given to the Son of man to be used by Him for His work when, like cross-bearers, they had set out to follow their leader to death. It was for helping and strengthening His flock that He was going to use them; so He turned their eyes to the grass in the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, devoted to preparing food for restoring and strengthening mankind. And looking, they saw that that "grass" was clothed by God with raiment of such gorgeous beauty, that even that of Solomon in all his glory could not compare with it. If God does that for such a humble instrument of man for temporal good, much more surely will He clothe the bodies which the Son of man is using as His own instruments for eternal good.

"O ye of little faith!" Faith, full, strong, and unwavering, has to fill those who are to help the infirmities of others: faith in the care and power of God. And the sign by which men may know the presence of that faith is utter uncarefulness about the means of living.

### b. 3.

#### SEEKERS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

*Beginning.* v. 36. And He spake also a parable unto them; No man rendeth a piece from a new garment and putteth it upon an old garment; else he will rend the new, and also the piece from the new will not agree with the old.

*General.* G. 3:3:1. The Healer of mankind. Following Him as the Son of God.

*Special.* xii. 29-32. Seeking their Father's kingdom.

Like the other chapters in this group, the rest of this outline of the Spokesmen's special training deals with three things needed for doing the work allotted to them. The first place is always given to that personal knowledge of Jesus which men must have who act as His representatives. So far, He has been pictured as revealing Himself to them in the character in which they were to know and serve Him; but in this section, instead of being given a description of Him as the Doer of the work, "bringing healing in His wings," Theophilus was merely supplied with some directions that He had given them. It was the same in the account of their training as sons of the bridechamber. No description was given there of the absent Bridegroom Whom they were learning to serve; no word of what He would be like when He came: only directions about the new garment which they, as well as the rest of the guests, had to be wearing; the standard of fitness which He wanted His people to reach. These new directions are also about the standard at which they were to aim in uplifting others: a standard which had also to be theirs; for they too had to be prepared for the Lord.

Although uplifters of humanity generally agree that the standard aimed at should be the greatest good that people can possibly have, they differ widely as to what that happy state really is, and how it should be reached. The two chief views of the time were those which Jesus forbade His pupils to take for their models: "Seek not ye what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink; neither be ye exalted." According to the first, happiness lay in the use of the things of this world, typified here by meat and drink; and the height of well-being was that state of things in which the person was abundantly supplied with them: whilst according to the second, happiness was found in his rising above

them, and being indifferent whether he had the good things of this world, or not. Whatever good points there may have been in those systems, Christ's Healers of humanity, those sent by Him to tend the life which consisteth not in the abundance of the things which the man possesses, were forbidden to make those goals their aim. The nations of the world seek after them; but not sons of the bridechamber of Christ. The getting of those things is no concern of theirs. Indeed there is no need for them to seek them; for, speaking as One Who knows the Father's mind, He told them that their Father knew that they had need of those things. The Father provides for all the needs of His children, and He would provide for their earthly happiness: for that which comes from the due supply of the necessities of life, and that which comes from being content whether they have them, or not. Their great aim, that for which they were to pray, was the new garment about which He had told them, which they, and all children of God, had to have: their rule of service was to be, "Seek ye His kingdom"; and to those who followed that rule there would be added the things which the Father knew they really needed.

"His kingdom" was the kingdom of their Father. The height of well-being is life as God meant it to be lived in His kingdom, the life of children of God:—for it is the fatherhood of God, and not His kingship, which is being emphasized here. What they were to seek for themselves and for their people was, that the Father should have possession of their hearts; that every hindrance to His rule should be taken away, and that they should live as His people should live, as children of God are meant to live in their Father's house;—a rule of love, a service of love. Right living, such as that, clothes with the new garment, and brings in its train all the true happiness found on earth; both that which comes from the proper use of the good things of earth, and that which comes from rising above them.

To reach that high standard, every infirmity had to be

healed; the person freed from every enslaving influence; delivered from evil:— a task so stupendous, that Jesus encouraged them with the cheering words which from the second part of the section: “Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

He Who spake thus to His little band of followers, telling them the mind of God, was the same of Whom the Voice from the cloud had said at the Transfiguration, “This is My Son, hear Him.” We can see now why no description of Him as their Master was given in this part of their training. They would be serving Him, not as the humble Son of man, but as the Son of God. It would be as soldiers of the Son of God, that they would go forth to war to regain His kingdom; as servants of the Son of God, that they would repair the ravages that evil had made in that kingdom: a little flock, truly, compared with the hosts of evil; smaller in comparison with their foes than the children of Israel had been with the hosts of Syria whom they overcame: but they were children of God serving His Son; and in His Father’s name He promised them the victory. For the leading idea in “the kingdom” this time is its conquering power: the final triumph which would assuredly come to those sent by the Son of God to carry on the work for which the Father had sent Him; those who go forth to combat men’s weaknesses and uplift the human race, seeking to give them that glorious state of freedom and happiness which comes when the Father has full possession of His children’s hearts, and, safe from all harm, they are yielding Him joyful service.

Thus the first essential for doing this work was that they should be followers of the Son of God; living and acting as sons of God: minding only heavenly things; seeking their Father’s kingdom; seeking to have it in their own hearts, and in the hearts of their people; aiming at the standard of perfection which exists in heaven, and set upon helping children of God to reach that standard, sure of being able

to deliver them from the evil assailing them, and heal their infirmities.

b. 4.

HEAVENLY-HEARTED

*Beginning.* v. 37, 38. No man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the new wine will burst the skins, and itself will be spilled, and the skins will perish. But new wine must be put into fresh wine-skins.

*General.* G. 4:3:1. By the power of God. Bringing to Jesus. (The healing of the man's son.)

*Special.* xii. 33, 34. Laying up treasure in heaven.

In all these outlines of the training of the second order of the ministry, the fourth section deals with what is needed for the actual doing of the work; and it was in order that they might be able to handle their work aright, heal people's infirmities and make them fit for the coming of the Lord, that the seventy were told that they had to sell what they had and give alms.

It was little, or nothing, that they could have had to sell; for not only had they left their trades and were following Jesus, but some of them, like Levi, had utterly forsaken everything. Moreover the work for which they were being trained was a life-long work; and what they needed for doing it was something which had to be with them to the end of their days. It was not by literally carrying out this command once, selling what they had and giving alms, that they would be equipped for this work of dealing with the infirmities of others; but by always having their hearts filled and ruled by the underlying motive: a motive whose sole object was the good of others; one which may be summed up as, Nothing for self; all for others.

The reason for such utter unselfishness was that they were to be vessels of mercy for Christ to carry strength and refreshment for Him to lives that were spiritually weak; and no ordinary material would do. Old wine-skins



were useless for keeping and carrying the new wine which the Bridegroom furnished. Fresh wine-skins were needed: that is men with tender hearts; hearts that could expand; hearts that were easily moved by the needs of others; and, as we can see from this command, men who would give their all rather than others should lack.

We can understand better now why the supplications of John's pupils were not used as a model for the pupils of Christ. In order to be able to pray for the weak with such power that they are delivered from the bands of their infirmities and given the glorious freedom of the children of God, the one who prays must have his heart filled with the unselfish, tender heart of Jesus.

As for what was said to them about purses which wax not old, the treasure in the heavens which faileth not; we have only to turn to the healing of the man's son, with which this second part of the section is connected, to understand that instead of being lifeless leather, their purses were to be human beings. The boy had been a prey to the spirit of an unclean devil; and in obedience to the command, "Bring hither thy son," the father had brought him to Jesus, and Jesus had given the lad back to him strong and well. His son, set free and healed, was the purse which waxed not old which the father had made for himself by bringing him to Jesus; the purse in which he could now place day by day the spiritual gifts of God entrusted to him for the lad. And that only son in the Saviour's care pictured too the treasure in the heavens which faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth; for it pictured a child of God in the eternal abiding place for which the shepherds of Christ have to prepare their flocks. The heart's desire of one who is a true father to his people, his aim and his hope for them are, that they should be forever with the Lord: and on joining them himself in that eternal meeting place in Christ his heart is set.

That is why being heavenly-hearted may be taken to be

the great qualification for carrying on this work of healing the infirmities of mankind: for to make his people always ready for the Lord whenever He may come to gather them in, the worker's goal has to be heaven; his aim, to make them citizens of heaven. It means that there is in his heart a strong and unselfish longing for the spiritual welfare of those under his care; a longing, deep and genuine, to help them heavenward, to lead them to the place where he himself is seeking to be; a longing as deep and unselfish, strong and abiding, as that of a father for his only son.

b. 5.

EXPECTING JESUS

*Beginning.* v. 39. No man having drunk old desireth new: for he saith, The old is good.

*General.* G. 5:3:1. Long-suffering. Self-controlled. (Fire from heaven.)

*Special.* xii. 35-40. The parable about the servants.

The last part of each of these outlines of the Spokesmen's training has to do with their behaviour towards the people to whom they would be sent. They would find that caring for the Christ-given lives of God's children would by no means be an easy task; but would call for much steadfastness and patience in dealing with those slow to reform, loath to let go their chains; much gentleness and forbearance in dealing with those who cannot be made to see how good is the goal set before them, or to accept the help that is brought them. This state of things their Master had taught them to expect when He told them that, "No one having drunk old desireth new: for he saith, The old is good"; and now He taught them how to have, and to keep, that great patience which the work of making such people ready for Him requires.

The secret was to have His return always in their minds, and to be unceasingly seeing that everything was in readiness for His coming, as if they were servants awaiting their

lord's return from a marriage feast. The time of such a return would have been of the greatest uncertainty. All that the servants would have known was that he would come that night; and come suddenly out of the darkness: and that they always had to keep their loins girded; always to be on duty. Not only had the lamps of their lord's house to be kept burning, and everything in readiness for him; but they themselves had to keep awake, ready at any moment to go out and welcome him.

Men living like that, with the thought constantly present with them, If Jesus were to come now, would not be likely to neglect their flocks and let the weakly perish unaided; nor would they be likely to be disheartened by the slowness of reform, and grow weary of well-doing. Moreover there was a very great reward to encourage them. As shown in the parable, it was the highest honour which a master could give: for the picture was that of the servant sitting at the table and being waited upon by his lord. So great was the value which the Saviour set upon having the infirmities of His people healed, and upon having servants who would be faithful to their trust, faithful to the end!

The first part of the lesson aimed at making them steadfast, zealous workers for Jesus; the second part, that about the damage done by the unlooked-for thief, guarded against their becoming unfit for their work through lack of self-control. The house in the parable stands, as before, for a man's "body" with all its faculties. The thief unexpectedly breaking through the frail wall of the house and stealing the treasures therein, represents the inrush of a temptation such as that which had overcome James and John when, thrown off their guard by the refusal of the Samaritans to receive Jesus, they had let fierce masterfulness take possession of them, and had ruthlessly sought to bring down fire from heaven and destroy the people whom the messengers had been trying to prepare for their Lord. Unwatchful, they had let their house be broken into. Jesus

had turned and rebuked them: for such impatience ill-became followers of the meek and lowly Son of man, the patient, loving Saviour. His work could only be done by men in whose hearts were to be found the gentleness, patience, and love of which that temptation had robbed them.

A man's "house" is broken into when he loses control of himself in any way whatever; and loss of self-control makes him unfit to help others to control themselves. As long as human nature is what it is, there is always the danger of being taken unawares, and having some passion or other aroused, something which damages the worker and unfits him for the service of Christ: and it was because of this danger that the Master gave His servants for a safeguard, readiness for His coming. "Be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh."

This gives us the key to many a lost opportunity for doing good and helping the weak. The servant of Christ was not ready. He did not help, because he was not in a fit state to help. A wrong influence was upon his heart; a wrong feeling, a wrong desire, was filling it. The influence radiating from him was for evil, and not for good; for dragging down, not for uplifting. He could lend no hand to struggling souls to help to prepare them for the Lord, because he himself was not prepared for the Lord. A helper of others heavenward has to be filled with the light of heaven; the light that fills the longing heart of one who is always looking for Jesus. He has to be always ready for the service of Jesus; guarding his heart for Jesus; watching against the thief that comes so treacherously and suddenly, praying to be delivered from evil.

## c. 1.

## FAITHFUL AND WISE STEWARDS

xii. 41-44. The instruction about expecting Jesus, which had just been given them, was made up of two parts, in the first of which they were taught to be always awaiting His coming, and in the second, to be always in a state of readiness for doing His work; and the chapter closes with practical applications of those two rules. They were not, however, meant to apply solely to Spokesmen; as the evangelist has pointed out by quoting Peter's question, "Lord, speakest Thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?" Once before in this treatise he described Jesus as speaking to all. It was when he was telling Theophilus what men had to do before they could come after Him as the suffering Christ; how they had to satisfy the test of fitness which He gave them, and deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Him. That test he prefaced with the note, "And He said unto all," to show Theophilus that it was not only intended for those who came after the suffering Christ, but was also to be used as a test of fitness for those who desired to come after Christ the King; or the Christ of God, as Peter, speaking for his fellows, acknowledged Him to be. The reason why a separate part of the treatise was not devoted to their preparation was that the things in which Theophilus had been instructed did not call for such a full account of the training of the highest order as of that of the Spokesmen, but was satisfied, as far as the early marks of fitness for the office were concerned, by the few details which the evangelist, from time to time, was able to give in connection with the Spokesmen's training. Two of those details are given here in answer to Peter's question: and in keeping with that question, the first answer applies directly to the twelve; whilst the second applies to all, and thus includes the twelve.

There is nothing perplexing in the question itself, un-

less we go out of our way to imagine such a strange state of affairs as that the several orders were sprung, one after the other, upon those men unexpectedly; or to imagine such an unnatural state of things as that no one ever asked Jesus about the kingdom of God of which He was so often speaking. The question is in perfect keeping with what must have been known from a very early stage: that that chosen band of twelve, which was being trained for first one order, and then another, was intended by Jesus to fill the last and highest.

It may, perhaps, have been the position in which the servants in the parable seemed to stand with regard to their lord that made Peter think that it applied to themselves as being those who were to be their Lord's head servants; but, in any case, he spoke as a servant asking a question of the head of the household to which he belonged, and it was as the Head of His household speaking to His servants that Jesus replied.

He likened their duties to those of a steward who had to give his lord's retinue their rations at the proper time, so that they might always be fit for service, and ready for their lord whenever he called upon them. The faithful and wise steward was one who evidently lived in constant expectation of his lord's coming. His work was never neglected. He was always busy; always to be found faithfully and wisely carrying out the duties entrusted to him. The blessing pronounced upon the servant whom his lord, when he came, found so doing, showed them plainly that that was the kind of man Jesus wanted for such service—one who saw and understood beforehand the needs of people, and strengthened them in their weakness before they failed; one who was untiring in his devotion to his Master's work, and did it as if he were expecting Him to come at any moment and inspect it.

It was the reward which would be given him that showed that this was the kind of man that Jesus wanted

the members of the next order also to be like: for the reward of that faithful and wise steward was that he would be placed in the highest possible position; set over all that his lord had. One of the marks then of a man's fitness for the highest order was, that he was faithful and wise in caring for the people of God; never failing to supply their needs, but stedfastly doing the work entrusted to him, as a Spokesman, of making them fit for the coming of the Lord.

c. 2.

FAITHFUL BOND-SERVANTS

xii. 45-48. No matter what the position of trust may be that a man is filling in the Church, his standing is always that of a bond-servant of Christ; and it is with his behaviour as a bond-servant that this closing lesson deals. In it Theophilus was shown the consequences of breaking the rule which Jesus drew from the parable about the house that was broken into and robbed because its master was not watching: the rule about always being in a state of fitness for doing their work, so that, however unexpectedly their Lord might return, He would find them behaving as His servants should.

The position which the servant filled in this part of the parable was still that of a steward. His ruin began with ceasing to look for the coming of his lord, and saying in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming." Quickly his "house" was broken into. First he lost patience; and instead of dealing gently and kindly with his lord's people, cherishing and helping them, he was harsh and cruel. Then he lost control of his appetites. The coarse animal nature began to show itself, and the man became a wreck; selfish, and unfit for his work. He had lost all sense of responsibility; all thought of what was due to his position.

For a trusted servant who fell away like that, no hope of forgiveness was held out; no hope of restoration. Sud-

denly and unexpectedly, his lord came, and cut him in two: that is, took away from him everything that made him a steward, and classed him henceforth amongst the unfaithful. It was an extreme case, and the punishment was extreme. Less blameworthy breaches of trust received less punishment: but all were punished; both those who failed in their duty through ignorance of what it was, and those who knew and did it not. Such was the awful parable that supported this part of the instruction which Theophilus had received about the service of the Son of man.

Their lord's will, which the servants in the parable had to do, was to give his attendants their rations in due season. Failure to do that for Christ meant failure to supply the spiritual needs of His people; failure to supply them with strength to overcome their spiritual infirmities. The rule of service which He had given them was, "Be ready." They were to let nothing unfit them for the work of tending the flock of Christ, nothing to keep them from always being in a state of readiness to supply any need that might arise. No excuses were allowed. The servant of Christ who knew what was wanted, and neither made ready, nor supplied the needs of the weakly, would be "beaten with many stripes": and even he who failed through not knowing his Lord's will would also be accounted blameworthy, though the "stripes" which he received would be few.

But whatever the cause of failure may be, when the Master brings home to His servant the fact that he has failed in the work entrusted to him, the pain which that servant suffers is severe; for it is the pain which comes from the knowledge of lost opportunities:—the aching of heart when he finds, too late, that there was good which he might have done but did it not; an infirmity that he might have healed, but, through ignorance, passed it by: the gnawing pain of the stricken conscience, when the man recalls work which he knew at the time he ought to have done, but which he left undone; when he remembers that it was through sloth, or



self-indulgence, that he was not ready to give the aid so badly needed, and that now the time for helping has gone.

That instruction was given to all; and to all the warning was given "to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more." In other words, the higher the office, the greater has to be the man's self-control; the more unceasing his carefulness about being in a state of readiness for his work; the more becoming his behaviour; the more unfailing his discharge of his duties. Thus another mark of fitness for the highest order was that the man had shown himself a faithful servant of Christ in this work of healing infirmities, and making ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him; that having been entrusted with the cure of souls, he had vigilantly and carefully tended his flock, and had always been in such a state of readiness for his work, that whenever the Lord, Whom he was awaiting, might have come, He would always have found him true to his trust.

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**THE TREATISE  
TO THEOPHILUS**

**VOL. II.**



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**THE TREATISE TO  
THEOPHILUS**

**NOTES ON  
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE**

**VOLUME TWO**

**BY**

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**PART III.**

**THE TEXT**

**ST. LUKE XII. 49.—XVIII. 30.**





## CHAPTER K.

ST. LUKE XII. 49.—XIII. 21.

(a). xii. 49-53. (b). xii. 54.—xiii. 17. (c). xiii. 17-21.

(a)

xii. 49-53. I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I, if it is already kindled?

But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?

Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. They shall be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against her mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

(b.) 1.

54-56. And he said to the multitudes also, when ye see a cloud rising in the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it cometh to pass. And when ye see a south wind blowing, ye say, There will be a scorching heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?

2.

57-59. And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? For as thou art going with thine adversary before the magistrate, on the way give diligence to be quit of him; lest haply he hale thee unto the judge, and the judge shall deliver thee to the officer, and

the officer shall cast thee into prison. I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the very last mite.

## 3.

xiii. 1-5. Now there were some present at that very season which told him of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered and said unto them, Think ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they have suffered these things? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish.

Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were debtors above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

## 4.

6-9. And he spake this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit thereon, and found none. And he said unto the vinedresser, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why doth it also cumber the ground? And he answering saith unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit thenceforth, well; but if not, thou shalt cut it down.

## 5.

10-17. And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath day. And behold, a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years; and she was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up. And when Jesus saw her, he called her, and said to her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands upon her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

And the ruler of the synagogue, being moved with indignation because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, answered and said to the multitude, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the day of the sabbath. But the Lord answered him, and said, Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and

lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath?

And as he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame.

(c.)

17-21. And all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him. He said therefore, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I liken it? It is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his own garden. And it grew, and became a tree. And the birds of the heaven lodged in the branches thereof.

And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.



**PART III.**

**XII. 49.—XVIII. 30.**

**NOTES**

**WHAT JESUS TAUGHT.**



## CHAPTER K. XII. 49.—XIII. 21.

### INSTRUCTION FOR HELPERS

a. xii. 49-53. b. xii. 54.—xiii. 17. c. xiii. 17-21.

a.

xii. 49-53. *Introduction.* The writer of this treatise evidently took it for granted that his readers would be men for whom once telling would be enough. Here, for instance, he has expected them to know, without a single word of explanation, that this new part is about the things which Jesus taught, simply because he had once before drawn their attention to the fact that he was following the order in which the first Part was arranged, and the teaching of Jesus was the next thing touched upon there.

The instruction recorded in this Part of the treatise was meant for members of the two orders about whose foundation Theophilus had just been told; and is arranged in five chapters, after the fashion of the five chapters into which the outlines of their training in Part II were divided. The connection between these two sets of chapters is very close. Not only is the subject-matter in the introduction to each of the chapters in Part II continued in the introduction to the corresponding chapter in Part III, but the model upon which they are built is the same; each of the new chapters being made up of two sections upon what may be called personal instruction to fit them for the work, and three upon what was needed for the actual doing of the work. Moreover, the instruction in the first two sections of each



chapter is connected with the illustrations which close the corresponding chapter upon their training; whilst that in the last three bears upon points which appear in the last three sections of that corresponding chapter. After the fashion of Part II, each of these five chapters continues the teaching begun in the corresponding section of Chapter D; and, with the exception of this chapter, develops in the same way each of the five parts of its section.

What the members of the two orders were being taught was how to do the work for which they had been ordained. Briefly speaking, that work was to gather people into the kingdom of God and then train them up to be worthy members of it, fit for the Lord when He came. It was the first part, reclaiming people and making them members of God's kingdom, which formed the work of the Helpers; and it was to establish the instruction which Theophilus had received about doing that work that the present chapter was given.

It opens abruptly with Jesus telling some persons unnamed what He had come to do. Who those unnamed people were Theophilus would know from what he had been told in the introduction to the corresponding chapter of Part II:—the same twelve whom he had been shown going about through cities and villages with Jesus as He proclaimed the kingdom of God and made known its good tidings, and learning to be His Helpers. They were still there watching Him, and learning how to preach; and now He was telling them some things about Himself, so that they might have the key to His preaching, and, when the time came, be able to preach the gospel to the poor just as He was doing.

He had begun by preaching the kingdom of God. It was the kingdom of God in its all-conquering power that He proclaimed: the kingdom which makes no truce with evil; which recognizes no right of evil to exist; which sweeps away all that will not yield. The Psalmist, rejoicing in the coming of that kingdom, had declared in Ps. 96:3 (Sep. Ver.), that

"Fire shall go before Him, and burn up His enemies round about"; and to cast that fire on earth Jesus had come. As the Caster of fire He was proclaiming the kingdom; and as casters of fire His Helpers were to proclaim it too.

It was by His preaching that He cast fire upon the earth; for what He said judged and condemned those who would not listen and repent, and His preaching was to them a savour of death unto death. It was the dark and terrible side of the gospel preaching; something so painful and sad, that nothing but the fact that it was what Jesus did by His own preaching could assure Theophilus of its rightness.

It was not to the preaching of Jesus alone, however, that the twelve were to look for the fire they were to cast; for the kindling had already been begun by the messages of the servants of God recorded in the Old Testament, and to them they were to turn. What it was that was to mark messengers of Christ, over and above their being users of those messages, was told Theophilus in the first section of the chapter in answer to the question, "What will I, if it be already kindled?"

The next thing which the twelve had heard Jesus do as He went about preaching was to make known the good tidings of the kingdom of God; the happy life of its people, the goodness and mercy of its King, and the ready welcome that suppliants would find. For the Preacher came, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them; and His casting of fire was followed by urgings of the endangered to escape. There was but one way of finding safety; and that was the way spoken of in Is. 45:20-26, where God, exhorting the escaped of the nations to turn to Him and be saved, declared that to Him every knee should bow. That bowing is done in the name of Jesus; of Jesus in His greatest humility; Jesus the crucified. Humbly to Him, and through Him, every one must come.

The path along which people were to be led into the kingdom of God, was the same along which the forerunner

had tried to lead them. He, however, had had to stop at the baptism which led unto the remission of sins; the baptism of repentance: Helpers of Jesus would give the Baptism for the remission itself. John could only tell his hearers to believe on Him Who would come after him: Helpers of Jesus would be able to tell them about Him Who had come, Him on Whom they had to believe. All that they were to tell people about Jesus could not, however, be fully established here; for, as the second quotation in the introduction pointed out, the baptism of His sufferings not having yet been undergone, He was constrained in His preaching, and was unable to give His pupils in its fulness the pattern which they would have to follow. For that reason the second section of the chapter was unavoidably incomplete.

The rest of the introduction foreshadows the last three sections of the chapter, and gives the key to the instruction which the Helpers received about so preparing those who sought to enter the kingdom of God, that each one would be fit to take his place in it fully equipped for beginning his duties. They had already learned something about the way in which this work had to be done. In the country of the Gadarenes they had been taught about winning sinners to Jesus; but as yet they had received no directions about the faith in Him which the penitent had to have: they had been taught about Baptism by the raising of Jairus' daughter, but not about the food which was to be afterwards given. They needed rules for their guidance in dealing with any claims that might be made to an inheritance in the kingdom of God; they had to know what proof of fitness they were to tell a person to offer; and they also had to know what they were to tell him about getting the help and guidance which he would need for life in that kingdom. All this they learned from Jesus; from the things that He told the people, and from the rules which He Himself followed.

What He now told them about Himself recalls the song

which the angels had sung at His coming: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace in men of approval." The men of approval, in whom peace would rest, were members of the kingdom of God; people living upon the earth, but not belonging to the earth. Nothing earthly could give that peace, or fit the person to receive it; wherefore the keynote of all this part of Jesus' preaching was separation from the earth. He was not there, He said, to give peace in the earth: that would be given later on. What He was then giving was division; and those whom He was then training would have to cause division also.

In the same symbolic way as before He showed them how His rule would apply to the preparation of those whom they were gathering into the household of God. He turned their eyes to a spot of earth, a Jewish household: the highest and noblest example of right living then known. In that house five people dwelt; the father and mother, the son and daughter, and the bride: but instead of remaining a united family it became divided, two against three, and three against two; the old folks clinging to the old order of things, the young ones taking up with the new. That was the way in which His preaching, and therefore that of His followers, would show itself in the three chief stages through which the person, who was being prepared, would have to pass: for although five persons are mentioned, it is the career of but a single human being which is being pictured.

The first part of the saying taught them about the stand they would have to take with regard to any claims a person might make to an inheritance in the kingdom of God, to belong to His household. The son was the heir. In due course he would receive an earthly inheritance, the place and honour held by the father, whose life he was regarded as continuing. To that he would look forward as his right. As soon, however, as he was used to represent one who was to be an heir of salvation, all was changed. A gulf lay between the possessor of the earthly inheritance and the heir

to the heavenly. The father was divided against the son, and the son against the father. The old life and its heritage had no place in the kingdom of God. Instead of being a help to any one seeking to enter that kingdom, it was a hindrance. Whatever claims or rights a person might have to enter the kingdom of God, they lay, not in his having earthly things; but in his having cast them away. And the aim of the Helpers' preaching had to be to bring to a head the antagonism between children of God and the world, and between the world and children of God: to make one who was to be an heir of salvation break wholly away from his old earthly life.

Seeing that the work of an eastern household was carried on by the women, the second part of the parable deals with the things which the person, who was being prepared, would be required to do; the mother representing the deeds of earth, the daughter, the things required by Christ. In the ordinary course, the daughter would have worked under her mother, and learned to do the same things her mother did, and in the same way; but there was something peculiar about the proofs of fitness which Jesus required of one who would become a member of the kingdom of God, something which made them quite distinct from the ordinary doings of life and utterly opposed to them; for by His preaching, the mother would be divided against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother.

In the last part of the household picture the person, whose career was being followed, is represented by the bride; and is therefore being regarded as one who has been enrolled in the household of God. Every household has its own work, and its own way of doing it; and a newcomer needs help in order to understand and do it as it ought to be done. This help the bride would naturally get from her mother-in-law; whom, to judge from Tobit 10:12, she had been taught to honour as her own mother. But the preaching of Jesus, according to the parable, would set the mother-

in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. The help and guidance, which the new member of the household of God would need, was not of the earth. The earthly-minded were opposed to it; and the very best that the earth could give was only a hindrance to the child of God. As before, the things of the world and the things of the kingdom of God were opposed the one to the other.

*Summary.* In this chapter the evangelist has finished assuring Theophilus about the Helper's training by showing him Jesus preaching the gospel to the poor. The extracts from the preaching of Jesus which furnished the assurance are very short; most of the ground having already been covered in the accounts of the forerunner's preaching, and the mission to the Gadarenes.

About the marks which were to distinguish the Helpers' gospel preaching, he was assured by having set before him Jesus, their Pattern, warning people to escape from the wrath to come by calling their attention to the signs of the times, and after that urging them to make up their minds and come.

As for the way in which the Helpers were to deal with those who wanted to enter the kingdom of God, the teaching of Jesus, which the evangelist quoted, showed that He recognized no one as being fit of himself to come, or as having any claim to enter it worth offering. One thing, however, He required, and required of all; and that was repentance. Repent or perish was the Preacher's message.

Nor did He teach the people that all the danger was over when once they had repented and come to Him. As shown by His parable of the fig tree planted in the vineyard, fruit would be required of them; proofs of the genuineness of the faith which had brought them to the Saviour. With regard to this too the Preacher's words seemed hard and stern; for their burden was, Bear fruit, or else be cut down.

The last of the directions to the Helpers, set before The-

ophilus, is found in the scene in the synagogue on the sabbath day, when the woman with the spirit of infirmity was healed. From what took place then, he was assured about the teaching which newcomers were to be given about getting strength to do what would be required of them, and take their place amongst the people of God, rightly living the new life which the Creator would give them in His kingdom at their Baptism.

The two parables which close the chapter trace the growth of the kingdom in a human being, its entering into him, growing, spreading, and transforming, until the rule of God holds full and undivided sway; thus sketching the person's career until he has reached the stage of fitness which Jesus wants to find at His coming.

b. 1.

TESTIFYING

*Beginning.* iii:7. He said therefore to the multitudes that went out to be baptized of him, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

*Continuation.* xii. 54-56. The reproof of the multitudes.

In keeping with the plan of the treatise, this section is connected with the first of the illustrations which closed the chapter upon their training; the illustration in which Theophilus was shown the pioneers of the kingdom going forth to prepare for its coming. There were to be no half measures in their dealing with people. Against those who would not receive them, the very dust which was upon their feet was to be shaken off, as a token of the fate that awaited them as enemies of their Lord. From that symbolic action the evangelist has passed on to the first of the rules which were to distinguish members of this order: the rule of testifying against those who would not listen, that they would perish by the wrath to come.

It was about that rule, and the way to carry it out, that

the twelve were now learning as they watched their great Example preaching the good tidings to the poor. He began by proclaiming the kingdom of God; and His preaching was as fire cast upon the earth bringing destruction upon all who would not escape.

Such casting of fire upon the earth was nothing new. John the Baptist had cast it when preaching his baptism of repentance; and he was by no means the first. As pointed out by the evangelist in John's question which he quoted, "Ye offspring of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath to come?", others had already helped in its kindling.

The wrath to come was the judgment of God upon sinners spoken of in Zeph. 11:15-18, and in the messages of other prophets. Like as the fire from heaven had fallen upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and blotted them out of the Promised Land, so would the doom foretold come down upon those who would not listen to God's messengers, and turn away from their wickedness. The rejection of the preaching sealed the fate of the sinner, and brought down upon him the fire of God's judgment; and in that way the preachers' warning furnished the kindling.

John made use of the kindling begun by the prophets: but he cast fire of himself as well; and very plainly did he speak in doing it. His hearers could have had no doubt whatever about the kind of men they were. "Offspring of vipers" he called them; creatures dangerous to all who came near them; venomous reptiles, that ought to be destroyed. The message of salvation had to begin thus; for until sinners knew what their state really was, and how dreadful the doom awaiting them, there was no reason why they should seek to be saved at all.

The Saviour's message of salvation began in the same way. Very little, however, had to be told Theophilus about it: for, like as John had made use of the preaching of the prophets, so Jesus made use of the preaching of John; and



all that the evangelist had to do was to show him Jesus completing the kindling already begun. The same plain speaking which had marked John's preaching to the multitudes fleeing from the wrath to come, marked the Saviour's preaching to them as well; for He told them to their faces what they were:—hypocrites, and not sincere in their efforts to escape the judgment of God. The face of the earth and the heaven, they knew how to interpret; but they did not interpret that time. They shut their eyes to the fact that the day, burning as an oven, spoken of in Mal. 4:1, was upon them; and that He Who was preaching to them was even then casting the fire which would destroy them: and by putting the thought away from them, they condemned themselves to perish.

Such was the way in which the Caster of fire preached; and such had to be the way of the servants whom He was making a flaming fire. For it was about themselves that the men who were to carry on this work for Jesus were learning as they listened to Him. The cloud, rising out of the west and coming upon the land with storm and tempest, was the little band of twelve; the beginning of that vast body that He was raising up to carry His message to the world: the blasting of the hot south wind was their preaching. For those who refused to seek shelter, their coming meant misery and destruction. Small wonder, therefore, that it was required of those who bore such a message that they should be filled with the hunger for souls; and that the Saviour mourned over those who were "full," satisfied with the number they had already gathered.

## b. 2.

## EXHORTING

*Beginning.* iii. 8. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance.

*Continuation.* xii. 57-59. Agreeing with the adversary.

The reader's point of view still lies with the twelve as they were following Jesus through cities and villages, watching Him preach the gospel to the poor. They soon found that He spoke to the people in another character besides that of the Proclaimer of the kingdom of God described in the last section; and that, to those who listened to His warnings, He spoke as the Bringer of its good tidings; telling them the good news that in the kingdom of God there was safety and peace, a refuge for all who would escape from the wrath to come.

The way of escape lay along a path such as that described in Isaiah 55:7, the path which the wicked were to take when God drew near to them. The ungodly was to forsake his ways, and the lawless man his counsels; and they were to return to the Lord, and find mercy. It was along the first part of that path that John the Baptist was urging people to travel when he told them to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance; fruits which would show that they had really turned their backs upon their old life. It was the second part of that path, the returning to the Lord, that Jesus was exhorting them to take when He told them the good tidings of the kingdom of God. Only, they had of themselves to judge the right. In other words, they had to make up their minds about Jesus; for the kingdom of God as He preached it was all summed up in Himself, and all depended upon Himself. It was that that had straitened Him so much in this part of His preaching; for, until His sufferings were past, people were unable to understand clearly, either about Himself, or the kingdom which He preached. Enough, however, was said by Him to assure

Theophilus of what he had been told the followers of Jesus had to preach, and what the people whom they won by their preaching had to do: how they had to come and bow down to the Crucified One in His deepest humility as the sole Head on earth of that kingdom which He had been preaching in its all-conquering power.

Those who carried on this work for Him would have to urge each one to come to a decision without delay. How serious their warnings would have to be about the danger of delay was taught them by the parable of the man who failed to get rid of his adversary, and was kept in prison until he had paid the very last mite; the smallest coin in use amongst the people of God. The "Archon," to whom the man in the parable was making his way, was Jesus Himself, the chief Ruler, the Captain of the hosts of the Lord. The adversary in his way was his inability to come to a decision about the right. It stopped the sinner on his way to the place of refuge; stopped him from coming to the Saviour: and there the parable left him reaping the fruits of doubt and perplexity; for there was no release until all was settled, and the full reverence and submission due to the Leader paid. An example had already been given in the case of Herod; the man whose perplexity was made use of in preparing for this section. He had heard of all that had taken place; of Jesus sending the twelve, and of their message to the people; but he could not of himself judge the right. He owned himself, indeed, to be the murderer of John; but through listening to the conflicting views which others held, he could not make up his mind about Jesus: and, a prey to perplexity, the evangelist had left him seeking in vain to see Him.

It was for this work of exhortation, the second of these distinctive marks of the order, that the Helpers would especially need the tender, sorrowing heart of which Jesus had spoken in "the sermon on the plain": the mourning for those who, in spite of all that could be shown them of

the kingdom of God, were unable to make up their minds to yield; and the patient, loving pleading which could not cease until the promise of their Lord was fulfilled, and their sorrow was turned into joy by their hearers going to Jesus.

b. 3.

PREACHERS OF REPENTANCE

*Beginning.* iii. 8. And begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

*Continuation.* xiii. 1-5. The butchered Galilæans, and the crushed eighteen.

The evangelist's custom in the third section of a chapter is to record some characteristic of Jesus, bearing upon the work in question, which doers of it have always to keep before them. He had shown Theophilus how, in the boat, Jesus had taught those whom He was training to preach to sinners for Him to know Himself as the Saviour mighty to save, to Whom all in danger can turn, on Whom all can rely. Now he showed him how Jesus taught them to know Himself as their Pattern in preaching; the Preacher Whose ways they were to follow, Whose preaching they were to imitate.

To the scene which had been set before him a new feature was now added. The same multitudes were there; and the twelve were also there watching Jesus, and learning how to preach the gospel to the poor: but it was no longer to the multitudes at large that He was speaking. There in front of Him stood a group of men; and it was to what He was saying to them that the twelve were listening.

Who those men were is shown by the note at the beginning of the section. They were some who were "present at that very time"; that is, at the time when the things related in the last two sections were taking place, and Jesus was warning people of their danger, and urging them to

judge of themselves what was right. In the lesson which was being given to the twelve, they served to represent people who had given heed to what they had heard, and were seeking admission into the kingdom of God. As such they now spoke to Jesus; and as the Founder of the kingdom of God, Who alone could lay down rules for admission, He answered them.

It was the completion of the lesson which the twelve had received about Him on the Sea of Galilee. There they had had revealed to them the power of the Leader with whom they were setting out: now they learned how they were to act for Him in dealing with those who came to make submission.

The speakers were evidently men who could see how his warnings and urgings applied to others, and how great other people's need of repentance was; but thought that they themselves were quite fit to enter the kingdom of God. It was to men of that class that the Baptist had spoken, when he said to the multitudes who were fleeing from the wrath to come and seeking to be baptized by him, "Begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." To have Abraham for their father according to the flesh gave them no claim whatever to receive John's baptism, and the place amongst the people of God to which it led. Indeed so valueless was that sonship, that it was not even necessary for making them "children of Abraham," children of the promise. There was nothing whatever of the nature of Abraham in those lifeless stones, for instance, that were lying on the ground around them; and yet out of them God was able to raise up children unto Abraham, people partakers of the promises. Inherited nature, no matter how highly exalted the parentage might be through which it came, gave people no claim to the baptism which John preached, and was altogether opposed to the Baptism for the remission of sins which Jesus

preached; for, as He had said, He came to set the father against the son, and the son against the father.

What they told Jesus had reference to what He had said when warning them to flee from the wrath to come. They tried to show that they could interpret the time, by telling Him about a case, which they themselves knew, of sinners upon whom the awful wrath of God had come. The case was that of the Galilæans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. They had sought to make atonement for their sins, but had sought in vain; for with the blood which was to have made that atonement, their own life-blood was mingled. They and their offering had been rejected. They had died in their sins. Such were the views of the men who stood before Jesus: but from Him they learned that that horror was not to be looked upon as a warning of the fate of great sinners, but of sinners of every degree; a warning of what their own fate would be unless they repented. For it was not, the soul that sinneth greatly, it shall die; but the soul that sinneth at all. And all had sinned. All were unfit to enter the kingdom of God. The very nature which they had inherited from their fathers was sinful and sin-stained, and instead of helping them to an inheritance in the kingdom of God, kept them from it. To be saved at all they had to repent: so the burden of the Preacher's message to them was, Repent, or perish.

The second selection, that about the men who perished at Siloam, carried on that part of the lesson on the Sea of Galilee in which the twelve were shown nature itself bowing down before Him with Whom they were setting out to gather people into the kingdom of God. They had learned then that He, for Whom they were to preach, was Lord of all; and they were afraid: for instead of drawing near to Him with the awe and reverence which were His due, they had come as if He were but a man like themselves. That had to do with their own attitude towards Jesus as servants in the kingdom of God: what they now learned as they

listened to His preaching was, what was to be required of those who came seeking salvation by becoming members of that kingdom. He was still speaking to the same group of men; and, as before, what He said to them had to do with something He had already told them. This time it had reference to the debtor who failed to give diligence to be quit of his adversary.

The waters of Siloam formed part of the water supply of Jerusalem. This water supply the Romans had taken in hand; and had raised funds for aqueducts by seizing upon the Corban, treasure set apart for God. The eighteen, upon whom the tower fell, would have been Jews who were working for them, and receiving sacred money in payment for work done for the heathen conqueror. They thus became doubly debtors to God: for they not only held money that had been devoted to Him, but by accepting it from the Romans, acknowledged their right to set aside the high priest under whose charge that sacred money lay. The high priest was "God's high priest," ruling His people for Him; and to fail in the reverence and duty which they owed to the high priest was to fail in the reverence and duty which they owed to God, and thus become debtors to God. As if unfit to be reckoned amongst His people, the tower in Siloam had fallen upon them, and they had perished.

This also had to do with the part of His preaching in which Jesus was much straitened by not having yet undergone all that was to be poured out upon Him; but the application of it to Himself is very plain. He was the Christ; the Head of God's people; the Representative of God. At His name every knee had to bow, and every tongue confess that He was Lord, to the glory of the Father. But the people of Jerusalem neither bowed at the name of Jesus, nor confessed Him to be the Lord; and by falling short of the duty and reverence which they owed to Him became debtors unto God. Not that this was peculiar to the people of

Jerusalem. From the way in which He spoke to that group of men before Him, Theophilus learned that as touching the honour paid to God through Jesus, all are naturally debtors; and that people have to be made to know and understand that not only all have sinned, but that all have thus come short of the glory of God. And he learned too that for this also the terrible rule had still to be followed, "Repent, or perish." Those seeking salvation in the kingdom of God had to acknowledge Jesus to be the Lord, or stay outside and perish.

Such was the example which the Saviour set those whom He was training to preach the gospel for Him; and by that example Theophilus was assured of what he had been taught about the Helpers, and the stand they had to take as preachers of repentance.

b. 4.

FRUITS WORTHY OF REPENTANCE

*Beginning.* iii. 9. And even now is the axe also laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

*Continuation.* xiii. 6-9. The transplanted fig tree.

Testifying unto people repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ was by no means the whole of the gospel preacher's task. Each one who fled from the wrath to come had also to be taught what he would have to do if he would not lose the place in the kingdom of God which would be given him at Baptism, and how he was to get wisdom and strength to do the things required of him. What the twelve learned from Jesus about these two things is found in this and the following section.

It was by the parable of the transplanted fig tree that Jesus showed them what He wanted every one taught about what would be expected of him when he was placed by Baptism in the kingdom of God. Likening such people to trees had been done before. John the Baptist had done so in his



preaching, when telling those whom he had baptized what their fate would be if their baptism made no difference in their lives. Speaking as if it had made them trees in the garden of the Lord, he told them that, at the same time, the axe was laid at their root; turned towards them, ready for use: and that the rule for its use would be, that every tree that was not bringing forth good fruit would be cut down, and cast into the fire.

Except for the part which it has in making a fruit-tree perfect and worthy of the name, fruit-bearing is for the good of others, and not of the tree itself. As a rule, the fruit which is brought forth by cultivated trees is for the use of human beings; so that the good fruit of which the Baptist spoke would have been good deeds done to other people. Every one whom he baptized had suitable work to do. None could remain idle. Those who did not become doers of good had no abiding place amongst the true people of God.

It was in much the same way that the twelve heard the Saviour warning people in His preaching. He drew their attention to a single fig tree growing in a vineyard; and by means of that transplanted tree taught them what was expected of a person placed by Baptism in the kingdom of God. The vineyard was not the tree's native place. It had been brought and planted there in the expectation that, in its new and favoured situation, it would bring forth fruit for the man and his household. The limit of time allowed for a fig tree to show its worth was three years. If it did not begin to bear fruit within that time, its case was considered hopeless. So the lord of the vineyard came at the end of three years, and passed judgment upon that tree. It was living only for itself. It not only bore no fruit, but it also cumbered the ground, and was a hindrance: and his verdict was, "Cut it down."

Although we are not told in the parable itself what the fruit was which the baptized were expected to bring forth, we know from what Jesus had said about setting the mother

against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, that in the things which He wanted done in His household there was something that not only made them differ altogether from the doings of the world, but kept the two in ceaseless conflict. To find what it was we have only to go back to the lesson on preaching which the twelve had received in the country of the Gadarenes, with which this is connected. That lesson closed with the people, now penitent, standing by the waters of the lake, and welcoming Him for Whom they had been looking. A marvellous change had taken place in them. No longer clinging to their old life and shunning the Saviour, they stood there full of joy at seeing Him, ready to be baptized and be with Him for ever. Thenceforth deeds worthy of lives lived with Christ, and lived in Him, would be expected of them; deeds worthy of the great change which had taken place in them: and those deeds were the fruit of which the parable spoke, the fruits worthy of repentance which each baptized person had to bring forth.

They would not be left to struggle to bring forth those fruits unaided. As the mention of the vinedresser in the parable showed the twelve, Helpers would be able to encourage their converts by telling them that everyone of them would be under the care of a servant of the Lord, whose work it would be to help them to do right: but they would also have to tell them that, like the fig tree, they would always be on trial; and that each one of them would have to bring forth fruit, and to keep on bringing it forth for the glory of God and the good of His people, otherwise he would not be fit to remain in the kingdom of God.

## b. 5.

## STRENGTH

*Beginning.* iii. 10-14. And the multitudes asked him, saying, what then must we do, And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise.

And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Teacher, what must we do? And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you.

And the soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither exact wrongfully; and be content with your wages.

*Continuation* xiii. 10-17. The woman with the spirit of infirmity.

In their lesson upon Baptism, after the new life had come to the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, Jesus arranged that something should be given her to eat; something that would give her strength, and enable her to live her new life and do its work: thereby showing them that those whom they baptized would also have to be provided for, and given strength to do the work of their new life. What Theophilus had been taught about this was upheld by the lesson which Jesus now gave the twelve.

The kind of work which would go with that new life had been touched upon by John the Baptist when those baptized, alarmed at what would befall them if they failed to bring forth good fruit, asked him what they were to do. First there was the proper use of God's gifts, about which he taught the multitudes by telling them to share their garments and food with the needy; next came the faithful keeping of God's law, which, in the case of the publicans, meant extorting no more than was appointed them; and lastly, there were deeds befitting a gentle nature, unworldly and contented, which he told the fierce soldiery to seek to have. Those three things, in their fulness and perfection,

formed the work of the new life begun at Baptism; the unceasing fruits of faith and life in Christ which all members of the kingdom of God had to bring forth, or be cut down like the fruitless fig tree. The duty of training people to do that work belonged to the order of Spokesmen: what the Helpers had to do was to teach the people about the source of the strength which they needed, and to prepare them to receive it.

No human wisdom or understanding, no powers of the body or of the mind would enable people to do those things as they ought to be done in God's kingdom. The aid which they were to be taught to seek was opposed to the spirit of the world; and, in return, was disliked and opposed by it: for, as Jesus had pointed out by the conflict between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, aids to success in the worldly life are not only useless, but are an actual hindrance to those enrolled in the kingdom of God. What it was that they were to be taught was briefly put before Theophilus in the scene now described.

The account opens with the note, "He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath." Once before Theophilus had been shown Him teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath, and had learned about Him that His word was with authority, and that He had the power of the Holy Spirit; and in that same light he was again to regard Him. His teaching this time would have been about life in the kingdom of God, the life which follows Baptism; and it was in connection with what He had been saying that He made use of the woman afflicted with a spirit of weakness who was amongst His hearers.

Before telling Theophilus what the pupils of Jesus were meant to learn, the evangelist gave him some needful information about the case.

The length of time her trouble had lasted was eighteen years—six longer than the twelve-year cases which had been used for teaching about Baptism; showing that the lesson

was about something which followed Baptism, and was distinct from it.

It was not one of those cases with which the Spokesmen had been taught to deal that he was being told about; for what the woman had is described as being a spirit of infirmity; the essence, as it were, of all infirmities; the natural state of a human being. Full of weakness, she was as helpless as an infant. Try as she would, she could never of herself stand quite upright: and when she did manage to raise herself somewhat, being unable to keep to the height she had reached, she sank earthward again; and became, as before, bent double. She had no power of herself to help herself. Like the girl, strength had to be given her.

That same spirit of infirmity had been in the girl from her birth. The change represented by the healing of the issue of blood did not take it away: it was still in her when Jesus took her by the hand, and gave her the new life; and would still be in her until she had received what was represented by the strengthening food which He ordained should be given her—that which He was about to do for the woman.

From this it is clear that there are three things to be done in the re-creation of a human being. Of these Baptism gives the cleansing and the life; but not the strength which the new life requires.

When Jesus saw the woman, He called her, and said unto her, "Woman, thou hast been loosed from thy infirmity." She had indeed been loosed; but, apparently unchanged, she remained still bent double as before. No power to act had been given her; and none came to her until Jesus laid His hands upon her. Then, at once, she was made straight.

There were thus two parts in what Jesus did for the woman; two things about which Helpers would have to teach the baptized; the full teaching and doing of which, however, had to wait until the baptism wherewith He was to be baptized had taken place.

The first had to do with her being loosed from her infirmity. That loosening had taken place before His hands were laid upon her, and therefore was not done by the power then given. It took place unseen during His teaching, when she heard and received His word, and the truth made her free. That part the Helpers could do.

Giving the needful strength, however, was not theirs to do. They had merely to teach people about it, and prepare them for it; and what they were to teach them all centred upon what Jesus then did to the woman. "He laid His hands upon her; and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." They would have to tell those whom they had already taught about Baptism, that, if they would become able to live the new life aright, they also would have to come and receive the laying on of hands, and use the gift which it would bring them. They would have to tell them that, when any of those whom Jesus would depute to act for Him laid his hands upon them in Jesus' name after their Baptism, they, like the woman, would receive the strength which would enable them to walk uprightly to the glory of God. The strength which Jesus then gave the woman, was the same which He Himself had received after His own Baptism by the down-coming of the Holy Ghost: and the uplifting, ennobling gifts, which they were to teach the people would be given at their Confirmation, were the same sevenfold gifts of the Holy Ghost.

"She glorified God"; for she had received what Jesus had meant the baptized to receive, when, at the close of the lesson on Baptism, "He ordained that something should be given her to eat." She had "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come."

In the short lesson that followed, the twelve learned about something else which they had to teach people about Confirmation. The setting of the lesson strongly resembles that of their lesson upon Baptism, The lesson upon Baptism was connected with a ruler of a synagogue, a man who was

forbidden to speak: this upon Confirmation is also connected with a ruler of a synagogue, a man who spoke and was condemned. Jairus represented those whose faith in the power of Jesus to give the new life was too weak for Helpers of Jesus. This man represented those who did not rightly value this laying on of hands in Confirmation. In his eyes it was not a matter of vital importance; for he counted it amongst the things which might not be done on a sabbath day. His ignorance showed itself in belittling what Jesus had done: in treating it as if it were a case of ordinary bodily healing, fit only to be done on the six days of the week, instead of regarding it as the work of the Creator supplying a necessary of the Christ-given life. What Jesus had done clashed with his views of what the ways of the kingdom of God should be; and under the cloak of zeal for the law of God, he made his attack. Such people the Lord branded as hypocrites.

His answer took a parabolic form. The ox and the ass of which He spoke, were the man's work animals: they belonged to him, and he used them for his service. The woman was "a daughter of Abraham," a daughter of the covenant: one of those who belonged to God, and had to serve Him. She plainly represented what people are made at Baptism.

The tethering in the stall corresponded with her bondage by Satan. The reference made to that bondage showed the Helpers what they were to teach about the fate of those whose weakness had not been taken away, and who had not been strengthened. Satan had taken advantage of her feebleness, and had not only stopped her from doing what she wanted to do, but by keeping her bowed down to the earth was making her do what she did not want to do. By the law as given through Moses, people of God were never to be left in hopeless bondage. The greatest length of time for them to be kept as bond-servants was six years (Ex. 21:2); and all through that time they could look forward to being set at liberty at the end of it: but this woman had

been held in bondage by Satan for thrice six years; which meant that, for anything she could do, her bondage was complete and hopeless. Thus like the rest of the examples chosen in this treatise, hers was an extreme case.

The loosening of the animals, corresponded with what had taken place when the woman was loosed from her infirmity—the loosening from Satan's bondage, from the spirit of weakness. The loosening of the work-animals, however, was but a means to an end—their getting the water so necessary for life and strength: but when Jesus came to this part of it, instead of speaking of what was to refresh the animals and make them fit for their work, He ceased to carry on the comparison; for the "living water" which He gave was the gift of the Holy Ghost, and that was one of the things about which He was straitened in His preaching at that time, His sufferings not having then been undergone. Hence He contented Himself with making them see its importance.

It was from the comparison which Jesus caused the ruler and his adherents to make that the Helpers learned about the importance which they were to teach people to attach to Confirmation. Since watering an ox or an ass was of vital importance, then surely what He had done for the woman was of vital importance also: and of an importance as much greater as a human being is above an ox or an ass; a servant of God above a work-animal; the water of life above common drinking water.

Then the evangelist showed Theophilus how they learned the value of teaching plainly about the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and upholding the dignity and use of Confirmation. The lesson came from the sight which they saw when Jesus had finished speaking: a lesson which had specially to do with the Helpers, but of course applied to all who taught the mysteries of the kingdom.

It was in one of the gathering places of the people of God that He had been teaching; a sample of what His servants



would afterwards meet with. In that congregation, and spoken of as if they formed a usual part of it, were adversaries of Jesus; people who were set against what He was teaching and doing. In face of all their disapproval and opposition, however, He upheld the importance and value of what He had done, as those who taught and acted for Him would have to do; and by His plain, personal speaking those adversaries were put to shame—a token to His followers of what would happen if they likewise preached the truth boldly. In His steps they were to tread; and His path ended in victory.

c.

PREPARED FOR THE LORD

xiii. 17-21. The parables of the mustard seed and the leaven.

The evangelist prepared Theophilus for what follows by telling him that the whole multitude was rejoicing for all the glorious things done by Jesus—things done in connection with the training of the Helpers, such as the conversion of the man possessed by the legion; the healing of the woman with the issue of blood and the giving of the new life to the girl, by which He taught them about Baptism; the straightening of the woman by the laying on of hands, which taught them about Confirmation—things which have to do with the development of a human being into a useful member of God's kingdom. That rejoicing multitude represented those who regarded the uplifting of the woman by the laying on of Jesus' hands as the climax of that development, the end and aim of what He was training men to do for Him; who held that, when people had been saved and made full members of God's kingdom, they had had all that was needed done for them: and the evangelist, by introducing the two parables which follow by the words, "He said therefore," showed Theophilus that the Helpers were taught to correct such ideas, and make people know that

their development had still to go on, if they would reach the standard required, and become people prepared, ready for the Lord.

Jesus began by asking two questions; one of which had to do with something then present, the other with something still to come. The first, "Unto what is the kingdom of God like?", referred to His work with the people as far as it had gone; that which the Helpers were to do: the second, "Unto what shall I liken it?", referred to what was to follow that work.

The answer to the first question about the kingdom of God was, "It is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his own garden." Unlike most other seeds, mustard does not decay in the ground. Neither heat nor cold, rain nor drought, destroys it. There it lies hidden, mayhap for years, giving no sign of its presence until the ground is broken up, and it begins to grow. It is the imperishable seed,—a fit representation of the kingdom of God. Moreover, from the well-known use made of it at that time to represent something very small indeed, the pupils of Jesus would know that what they were being told about was the very beginning of the living power of the kingdom of God in a human being; just the entrance of it into him. For the man's own garden, the piece of land which had come under his protection and care, and on which he raised plants for himself, was one of those who had been won to repentance by the preaching to which the twelve had been listening, and, like the people of Gerasa, had yielded themselves to Jesus: and the grain of mustard seed being cast into that garden represented the kingdom of God coming into a person at the Baptism for which he had been prepared—the Baptism which the Helpers themselves were giving.

In answer to the second question about the kingdom of God, "Unto what shall I liken it?" there came a vision of what would then take place, dealing with work which would

be done by the other orders. "It grew and became a tree." The seed-form had passed away; but to the life that was in it there had been given its own body, the form which it was to bear in the world whilst doing its appointed work—a mustard plant gradually rising heavenward until it became a tree capable of bearing fruit, living for others. It was a picture of a human being, a member of the kingdom of God, freed and strengthened through Christ by the laying on of hands, living the new life; showing forth to all the power and glory of God by bearing those fruits of grace which John the Baptist had pointed out to his people.

In the man's own garden it grew; his own tree; under his care; to be watched over by him, tended and trained, just as the gardeners of the Lord have to cherish those whom the Master has placed under their care.

But the birds of heaven came and abode in its branches, injuring and defiling the plant, and devouring its fruit. What was meant by the birds of heaven had been explained in the parable of the sower. They represented the devil; and their coming meant the coming of evil and its foul train, defiling the child of God and putting a stop to his doing good. One of the duties of those in charge of God's people would therefore be to free and to cleanse them—an unceasing work, for the birds had made the tree their lodging-place.

Again the question was asked, "Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?", and again in the answer there was pointed out to the listeners work which would have to be done by the next order of His servants. They were shown the heart of the man, his inner nature, as Jesus wanted it to be: for whether we take the three measures to mean the body, soul, and spirit of a man, or the feelings, thought, and will, they stand for the human being whose career is being traced.

This time the kingdom was likened to leaven. In common with the mustard seed, the leaven represented the rule

of God, the living power of His kingdom; but, by this remarkable fact in its growth and spread, it introduced a new feature. No matter how much yeast may increase, nothing different from the original particle is produced. No matter where it spreads, or under what circumstances it may be found, in every place or age it is always the same: the same within and without; each grain of it a repetition of the original. It represents the unchangeable law of God; and the casting of it into the meal, the implanting of that law into the heart of man. There it is meant to work until its living power has changed every part of his nature, and he is ready for the Lord, a member of His kingdom prepared for Him.

The two things which the woman had to do symbolized the last two parts of the work of these servants of Christ for His people. First, she had to bury the leaven in the three measures of meal, like as they would have to implant the living law of God in the heart of each member of their flocks: and secondly, she had to help its spread by taking care of the meal, supplying it with what it needed for the leavening, and keeping it so that the leaven would work rapidly through it—work which represents the third part of the work of caretakers of God's people; that of supplying them with what they lack, and helping them to become such that the will of God has free course in their hearts and they have become a people prepared, ready for the Lord.

Such was the outline of what people were to be told about the changes to be made in them, and the part that would be taken by other servants of Christ.

## CHAPTER L.

ST. LUKE XIII. 22.—XIV. 35.

(a). xiii. 22, 23. (b). xiii. 23.—xiv. 14. (c). xiv. 15-35.

(a).

xiii. 22, 23. And he went on his way through cities and villages, teaching, and journeying on unto Jerusalem. And one said unto him, Lord, are they few that be saved?

(b). 1.

23-30. And he said unto them, Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are; then shall ye begin to say, We did eat and drink in thy presence, and thou didst teach in our streets; and he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without.

And they shall come from the east and west, and from the north and south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

And behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

2.

31-35. In that very hour there came certain Pharisees, saying to him, Get thee out, and go hence: for Herod would fain kill thee. And he said unto them, Go and say to that fox, Behold,

I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected.

Howbeit I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you: and I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

### 3.

xiv. 1-6. And it came to pass, when he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching him.

And behold, there was before him a certain man which had the dropsy.

And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not? But they held their peace.

And he took him, and healed him, and let him go.

And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a son or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on a sabbath day? And they could not answer again unto these things.

### 4.

7-11. And he spake a parable unto those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place.

But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee.

For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

## 5.

12-14. And he said to him also that had bidden him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbours; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

## (c). 1.

15-24. And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many: and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame.

And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

## 2.

25-35. Now there went with him great multitudes: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after

me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and asketh conditions of peace. So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Salt therefore is good: but if even the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill: men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.



## CHAPTER L. XIII. 22.—XIV. 35.

### INSTRUCTION FOR THE SPOKESMANSHIP

a. xiii. 22, 23. b. xiii. 23.—xiv. 14. c. xiv. 15-35.

a.

xiii. 22, 23. *Introduction.* The instruction outlined in this and the three following chapters was meant to fit men for work such as that which the man and the woman in the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven would have had to do; and its arrangement corresponds with that of the parables. The parables began with a sketch of the seed as it grew and became a fruit bearing tree; thus tracing in a general way the career of the person taken as the type: the outline of this instruction begins in like manner with a chapter covering, in a general way, the preparation of men for doing what gardeners of the Lord have to do for those under their care,—cleansing, guiding and helping them to become worthy members of the kingdom of God.

In keeping with what Moses at God's command had done, the Prophet like unto him was preparing seventy men to help Him in this work of caring for the people of God, and to act as the Sanhedrin of His kingdom. The training of the whole band would have been the same as the sample which the evangelist has shown Theophilus as having been given to those members of it who also belonged to the twelve. It had been begun at Bethsaida by their being taken aside privately by Jesus, and shown how He welcomed, taught, and healed the multitudes that followed Him; and it was continued now by their still being treated

as men who were to share in the counsels of their Lord, and train up His people for Him. Taken into His closest confidence they were given instruction like that which is briefly recorded in this chapter; instruction which completed for Theophilus the outline of the general preparation of men for the spokesmanship. What they were now taught was founded upon that law of love which He had laid down for those who "heard"; that is, for men who responded to the call of God.

The divisions of the chapter are the same as those of the chapter just ended: the first two sections dealing with the kind of man a Spokesman should be; the last three with the doing of his work. It is introduced with a portrait of Jesus as His Spokesmen would have to serve Him.

The first part of the portrait shows Him going through cities and villages teaching the people. He had already gone through those places proclaiming the kingdom of God and making its good tidings known; so that the teaching which He was now giving was meant for those who had listened to His message and had become people of God. The Prophet like unto Moses was doing what Moses in Ex. 18:16 had stated to be his work for the people: namely, giving judgment upon each, and teaching them the ordinances of God and His law.

Jesus journeying on unto Jerusalem completes the portrait. At Jerusalem there awaited Him all that it had been foretold the suffering Servant would undergo; and yet to Jerusalem He was making His journey. Although He knew that it was the way to death, the anointed Messenger of God went steadily on with the work which He was sent to do: proclaiming release to captives, recovering of sight to the blind, and setting at liberty them that were bruised. What men had to be in order to follow Jesus as thus portrayed was pointed out to Theophilus in the first two sections.

Whether it was that the fruits of the journey seemed

meagre to him, or that he was wondering if, as of old, only a remnant would at the last return and be true to the kingdom of God, a certain man asked Jesus the question which serves as an introduction to the last three sections: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" This question the evangelist has answered as if the number would depend upon the men into whose care the people would be placed; and has shown Theophilus how the Lord guarded His servants against faults which would lead to few being saved, and taught them what to be and do so as to lead safely to the end all whom He would place under their care.

Like the rest of the chapters in this part of the treatise, the subjects of the first two sections are foreshadowed by the closing illustrations of the corresponding chapter upon their general training, whilst those of the last three are suggested by something mentioned in the last three sections of that chapter.

*Summary.* The chapter is arranged as if Theophilus had been shown a number of men following Jesus, and was being told what they had to be and do if they would follow Him into His house and be with Him there as His friends, learning to carry on His work for Him and in His name.

First he was told about the men; how they were taught to enter the house, and take their places in its council-chamber: and then about the Example they were to follow; about Jesus doing the work which they would have to carry on in His name.

After that he was shown Jesus teaching them, by means of a gathering in a house, that the great rule of the office they were to fill was to do good; that their rule of service was to set themselves aside, and seek solely the good of others; and lastly that the rule of behaviour was to put away all thoughts of earthly rewards, or of advantage for themselves, and to supply the needs of those who lacked.

The chapter closes with long extracts bearing upon the first two sections: one having to do with those who came

from the east, west, north, and south to sit down in the kingdom of God; the other with what was needed for being pupils of the suffering Servant, learning to know Him better, and grow into His likeness.

b. 1.

ANSWERING THE CALL

*Introductory.* G. c. Following Christ.

*Beginning.* vi. 27, 28. I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you.

*Continuation.* xiii. 23-30. Entering the house.

The evangelist began by showing Theophilus the kind of instruction by which Jesus made men fit to be taught how to represent Him as He was when He went through cities and villages teaching, and journeying on unto Jerusalem. He pictured it as being given to men whom the Lord had called; men who had heard His voice, and, in answer to His call, were setting out to follow Him. The path by which they were to join Him led to a house; His own house; into which He had entered, and into which they were to seek to enter also, and there be numbered amongst His friends. Inside the house was a room, where those who gained admission would meet; and, as the Sanhedrin of the kingdom of God, share in the counsels of their Lord. All who would find a place in that council-chamber had to enter the house by the narrow door, the private entrance of the friends of the Lord; and it was about passing through that narrow door that they were first instructed.

What they were taught in this section about following Jesus is a continuation of what they had learned when going in the way with Him as described in the close of the chapter upon their general training. The first part of that lesson had been introduced by a certain man saying unto Him, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." In His reply our Lord had spoken about Himself, saying, that

the Son of man had nowhere to lay His head; thus making it evident that, to follow Him, the man would have had to take no account of himself at all. And the same rule held for following Him through that narrow door.

That was the negative part of denying themselves. There was also something which had to be done; something so hard that it called for the warning, "Strive to enter in by the narrow door." We learn what that was by turning to the first of the rules which Jesus had given them when beginning their instructions for the spokesmanship. That narrow door was the door of love. Love for others. Love for enemies. No ill-will was to be brought in there; no bias, no coldness towards any one. Those who would pass through that door, and enter into the council-chamber of their Lord, had to cast self away so completely, that they could do good to those who hated them, bless those who cursed them, and pray for those who despitefully used them. And to do that many were not able. They could reach the door; but, unable to love their enemies, they could not enter. There was no place in the Sanhedrin of the kingdom of God for those who could not truly love.

*Workmen of justice.* At the door they stood, and knocked; crying to their Lord to open to them: but from within the answer came that they were unknown to Him. Such people Jesus does not recognize as His friends. Whereupon they began to present what may be called their credentials. They had eaten and drunk in His presence, publicly owning Him as their Lord: they had been trained as His Helpers, listening to Him as the Prophet Whom God would raise them up. But even those things did not make them fit to enter. Breakers of the law of love, they were ordered away; for they were workmen of injustice; and only workmen of justice were fit to be enrolled in the Sanhedrin of God, and judge and rule others.

A description of the Sanhedrin followed. The people mentioned as belonging to it were Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob—receivers of the great promises of God; the three whose God He specially called Himself;—and all the prophets, the spokesmen of God: so that it represented the body of those to whom God entrusts His promised gifts, and of whom He makes use to speak for Himself and declare His promises.

*Obedient.* From the east and from the west, from the north and from the south men would come and sit down in the kingdom of God. They would not come of themselves, but in obedience to the summons sent them by the Lord of that house. Like the cross-bearer they would “leave the dead to bury their own dead,” and turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, would come straight to the gathering-place, there to be His people, under Him, ruled by Him, owning Him as their Lord, and henceforth obeying Him and Him alone.

*Stedfast.* But even within the house itself there would be a testing and a sorting; for “there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.” Men, first in love and loyalty, would be seen to fall from their high estate; their hearts having turned back to things which they had given up for Jesus: whilst men, far behind the rest in fitness for the council-chamber, would rise to the first rank through their whole-hearted devotion to the cause of Christ. For no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Such were the qualifications of those who, answering the call, would be found fit for a place in the Sanhedrin of the kingdom of God.

## b. 2.

## MODELLED UPON THE SUFFERING SERVANT

*Introductory* G. c. Following Christ.

.*Beginning.* vi. 29. To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloke withhold not thy coat also.

*Continuation.* xiii. 31-35. The faithful Messenger.

The opening note, that it was "in that very hour" the Pharisees came, shows how closely these two sections are connected. Both are led up to by the same account of what had taken place in the way; and both have to do with the kind of men true followers of Jesus should be. In the former section, however, it was towards the followers that the eyes of Theophilus had been turned: whereas in this, it is towards the Leader Whom those men were following; the Master of the house in the character in which, as His followers, they were to resemble Him. The three views which had been shown of Him as they went in the way were Jesus homeless; Jesus ordering, and Jesus leading.

The instruction in this section deals with the rule of meekness and submission which had been given them: that about turning the other cheek to the smiter, and yielding without a struggle to the despoiler. Did it mean that servants of Jesus were to yield to the will of men, and that His service was to be at the mercy of men? That, when those in power sought to crush them and drive them away, shepherds of the flock of Christ were meekly to yield, leave their flocks to their fate, and depart? The answer is found in what Theophilus was now told about the Master and the rules that He followed; for it was His example that they were to imitate, and His steps in which they were to tread.

The lesson is introduced by the Pharisees who now come upon the scene, representing, as before, unworthy shepherds. This time they are connected with Herod; and

their bad qualities, against which the followers of Jesus were being safeguarded, are to be found in the nature and ways of the fox, the animal to which he was likened. The fox's home in that country was in the earth, amongst old ruins, where it found shelter and safety; and in its ways it was cowardly, crafty, and deceitful. They were qualities such as these that were showing themselves in the Pharisees that day when they urged Jesus to come out of the place where He was, and go away, because Herod, in whose jurisdiction they all were, wished to kill Him. Against such faults the followers of Jesus were guarded by having their eyes fixed upon Him, and the example which He now set them in doing His work.

*Undeterred.* It was as a homeless wanderer that Jesus had depicted Himself in the first of those closing illustrations in the chapter upon their general training. Why the Saviour had nowhere to lay His head was because of the unceasingness of His work amongst the outcast and sinners. It was the first part of the work which He was sent by God to do, that of proclaiming release to captives; rescuing them from evil, healing their sin-sick souls, and restoring them from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness: work which is referred to thus in Hosea 6:3 (Sep.Ver.); "After two days He will heal us; in the third day we shall arise and live before Him, and shall know Him." Those who carried on that work would have to forsake all that was represented by the cowardly, earth-hiding fox, and follow truly the example of Jesus. His rule was, to go on stedfastly and openly with this work of mercy until He had accomplished it, and by His death had given life. There was no leaving off for any cause whatever. "Behold I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected." Heedless of themselves, His servants have likewise to go on unceasingly with this work, faithful to the end; letting nothing turn



them aside in the war with evil, nothing keep them from healing the sin-sick.

*Faithful unto death.* The next part of the work which He was sent to do was to proclaim recovering of sight to the blind; enabling them to see and know the truth, the will of God revealed to man. Those who did this work for Jesus would have to give the light that He gave, the law as taught by Him; carrying out His commands about doing it as unflinching as He Himself carried out the will of God. For the Master, Whom they were to serve, allowed nothing to excuse disobedience to His command; not even such a sacred duty as that of a son to bury his father. The temptation which would assail them would be, to avoid giving fully and clearly the whole message of God, and to handle it in such a way as to bring no trouble upon themselves by clashing with the world and its ways; displaying thereby the craftiness and cunningness of the fox to which Herod had been likened. Jesus' rule, the one which He Himself followed, was given in the words, "Howbeit I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." The three days, as before, denote completion; so that the rule for any one sent to speak in God's name is to go on unswervingly and unceasingly with the work until it is done; as Jesus did when journeying to Jerusalem, although it led to death. It was His duty; and to that duty He was true, even unto death.

*Trusting in the name of the Lord.* The third part of His work was the uplifting of humanity: not by dealing with people in masses, but one by one; setting at liberty each one that was bruised, and healing every one that had need of healing: and it was to fit them for carrying on that work of helping the weak and healing their infirmities that instruction like that in the third part of this section was given them.

The lesson is led up to by what took place when a man,

declaring his intention of following Jesus, asked leave to go first and say farewell to those who were in his own house. The rebuke which he thereby brought upon himself taught the pupils of Jesus that, to be fit to share in this work of His, their hearts had first of all to be set wholly upon Him and the weakly children of God whom He was seeking to heal.

The Pharisees and the people whose shepherds they undertook to be are now represented by Jerusalem and her people. The city is spoken of as if it were a woman in charge of her children: children whom the Saviour, as the Guardian of the weak, the Healer of infirmities, was longing to come and take under His care, and keep in perfect safety, peace, and happiness; sheltering them from all harm as a hen gathers her helpless brood of little ones in safety under her wings. And that yearning love of the Saviour had to fill the hearts of His followers.

It was by the evangelist's note about Jerusalem—that it is she that kills the prophets, and stones them that are sent unto her—that the special fault of the Pharisees against which the Spokesmen were being guarded was pointed out. She would not follow God's way for the healing and perfecting of her children; but, casting aside His counsel and help, went her own way trusting in herself. Her conduct resembled that of the lawyers when the Wisdom of God sent them prophets and apostles; and the allusion to it showed that the Pharisee's fault was rejecting the Wisdom of God and His way of healing the people, and trusting in their own strength and in the ways of the world. As shepherds of that type, they rejected also the healing and help which Jesus brought for their people; with the result that He would not recognize them as having anything to do with the preparation of people for Him. Their house was left unto them; an earthly house, where the shelter was that of the earth, and children were made ready, not for the Lord, but for the world. And the Lord's declaration

about such shepherds was, "Ye shall not see Me until ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

It was in the name of the Lord that the Psalmist had repulsed his foes; and it was in the name of the Lord that David had come and freed the people when all earthly means had failed, and the mighty men of Israel were standing helpless in the presence of the giant, unable to help them. And it is through the Son of David, Whom God has sent in His name, and through Him alone, that deliverance still comes to the people of God in their weakness.

What His declaration meant was, that before those shepherds of Israel would see Him and be recognized by Him, they would have to know, and confess, that they were unable of themselves to heal the infirmities of their people, and uplift them to the height required; and, longing to help them, would rejoice in the coming of Jesus with the only true healing power: and what His pupils were learning was, that to be able to heal those under their care, they had to be men who knew that Jesus gave them such power, and would trust in the name of the Lord, and use it and it only, for that work.

### b. 3.

#### DOERS OF GOOD

*Introductory.* G. 3. The suffering Servant.—The Transfiguration.

*Beginning.* vi. 30. Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

*Continuation.* xiv. 1-6. The healing of the dropsical man.

The lesson in this section is connected with what took place upon the Mount of the Transfiguration. On the mount Jesus appeared as the suffering Servant anointed and sent by God to do His will: here He appears as that same Servant fulfilling His mission by going about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil; and it is as the

Doer of good, teaching His followers how to act as His representatives, that He is now to be viewed.

A house was pictured to Theophilus; into which he was shown Jesus entering, and sitting down at the table. Although it was to those who sat at the table with Him that Jesus spoke, the instruction that He gave was really meant for the lookers-on, of whom no mention is made, to teach them how men are to act in the household of God. Those lookers-on would have been pupils of Jesus, who were following Him to Jerusalem; members of the seventy, amongst whom Theophilus was supposed, in imagination, to place himself and view the scene.

His being told beforehand that the man at the head of the house was a Pharisee prepared him for a series of lessons in which things which ought not to be found in shepherds of Christ's flock would be corrected; things which would account for so few being saved. He was told, moreover, that the man was one of the leading Pharisees. The Pharisees, as a body, would not recognize the right of the Romans to rule in the Holy Land; and, as Josephus tells us, refused to take the oath of allegiance to Cæsar Augustus and Herod. They worked for the coming of the kingdom of God, as they understood it; and they worked in their own way. It was a meeting of the leaders of the two systems; and those present were closely watching Jesus to learn about His ways for the advancement of the kingdom, and to see the stand which He took.

Before Him was a man in need; a dropsical man, swollen with the water which had made its way into the tissues of his body: a living picture of Ps. 68:1. (Sep.Ver.), "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul." By means of him the lesson was given. The line which it took is shown by the mention of the lawyers and Pharisees; for by coupling men skilled in the law with the false shepherds of the house of Israel, the evangelist was pointing out that it was upon a law of God's kingdom about which wrong

views were likely to be held. The law in question was the rule which the followers of Jesus were to keep when acting in His name; namely, "Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again," the rule which made them storehouses of good, open to all comers: and the lesson upon it was to teach them how doing good was to be regarded in the kingdom of God, and how it was to be done by representatives of Him Who is the Fountain of all the good gifts of God.

It was the sabbath; and on that day only works of vital importance were regarded as lawful: so He began by asking those lawyers and Pharisees who were watching Him, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to care for those in need, or not?" They were silent. The answer was not to come from them, but from Jesus; and it came from what He did. Treating the dropsical man as if he were one who had to be rescued from the waters which were come in even unto his soul, He laid hold of him; and then healed him, and let him go. It was a picture of the Lord of the sabbath exalting His great work of doing good to a place of vital importance in the kingdom of God; and showing how it was to be regarded by all who carried it on for Him and provided for the lives which He created and placed in His Church.

The lesson closed with His hearers being made to apply to themselves what they had just been taught, and to picture themselves as being called upon to do good on the sabbath day. They were made to picture themselves as hearing the cry of the needy in verse fifteen of the same Psalm; the verse where the prayer goes up to God, "Neither let the well shut its mouth upon me"; the cry of one in danger praying to be delivered. Whether the appeal came to them from a son, or even from an ox belonging to them, that had fallen into a well on the sabbath day, would they not straightway pull it out, sure that God's blessing would be upon the deed although it was the sabbath; and sure also that it was only what they ought to be forward in doing both as fathers

of families and righteous men? For "a righteous man pities the lives of his cattle." Prov. 12:10. (Sep. Ver.)

They could not gainsay it. Even those lawyers and Pharisees could find nothing against the position which Jesus took; so self-evident was it that that was the way in which God's servants should do His will. And the lookers-on knew that, if many were to be saved, it would be because they served Jesus in the kingdom of God, not only as righteous men, but also as fathers filled with pity and love for those whom He would put under their care; doers of good to all in need.

#### b. 4

##### SELF-ABASING

*Introductory.* G. 4. Fellow-workers with Jesus.—The pupils who failed.

*Beginning.* vi. 31. As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

*Continuation.* xiv. 7-11. The self-asserting guests.

According to the plan of these chapters the next scene in the house would have taught Theophilus about the actual doing of the work; how to do it so that many would be saved: and yet there is no trace whatever to be found in it either of the work, or of those for whom the work was to be done. All that can be seen is a number of men taking their seats at the table, and Jesus watching them. The reason is, that it was upon something in the workers themselves, the men whom Jesus treated as His friends, that the well-being of the work would depend; something without which they would assuredly fail: and that the lesson was being devoted altogether to that essential. The method followed in it is the same as that which was followed in the lesson based upon the healing of the man's son. There it was by means of pupils who failed that they learned what would make them fail in their work for Him, in spite of their having had all the power given them that the doing of it needed.

Here it was by means of those self-asserting guests that they learned what would make them fail in spite of their having had the golden rule given them to do to others the things they would like to be done to themselves.

To the guests, the men whom the host had called, the words of Jesus were a plain, personal lesson upon their treatment of one another; to His followers, they were a parable. Called to be with Him, to live and work as His friends, they saw in those guests themselves; and in the parable instructions to themselves to fit them to go forth from His presence and speak in His name. The need for such instructions lay in the relationship in which they would stand towards the people whom they would have to help. They would have to be over them as fathers over families, shepherds of the flock of Christ; and it would be very hard indeed for them not to be affected by their position, and tempted to lord it over those who were put under their care. The lesson, however, was taught them, not in connection with their people, but their fellow Spokesmen; for men who could behave towards their fellow-workers as taught in this parable, would have no difficulty in behaving towards their people in the way the Master wanted.

It was a very short lesson. First they were warned against the fault by a picture of the shame felt by one of those self-seekers when he had to get up from the seat he had taken, and, in the sight of all, go down to a lower one; degraded by him who had called him. Then they were urged to be humble-minded by having pictured to them the honour which would come to a man who accounted himself less worthy than his fellows, and took a lower seat; how he would be led to a higher one, to one nearer the host himself, and thereby openly avowed by him to be a closer and more honoured friend. After that they were told what they were always to expect in the service of Jesus: that every one that exalted himself would be humbled, and he that humbled himself would be exalted.

What gave rise to the parable was the sight of those who were called picking out for themselves the chief seats. The state of mind that made them act like that, and seek to appear more honourable than their brethren, is one which shows itself in many ways. It grudges the success of a man's fellow-workers, and the praise awarded to them: it makes men find pleasure in hearing about their fellows' faults and failings, and seeing their weak points,—the pleasure of feeling their own superiority, their own fitness to take a higher place: it urges them to keep themselves before the eyes of the public, prominent above their fellow Spokesmen. Self-satisfied, and feeling that they are filling a high place in the sight of all, they lose their place and honour in the kingdom of God; being abased by their Lord in His household: for in that household, every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled.

The rest of the rule is, that "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," like the guest at the table, by being brought nearer to Him Who has called him. What would cause them to be recognized as closer friends, and therefore better doers of His will, was self-abasement: such as would show itself in turning their eyes away from their own merits, and looking instead at the good points of their fellows; at the good work their fellows had done; at the fitness of their fellows for their Master's service: shutting their eyes to the faults of their brethren, and dwelling instead upon their own unfitness and failures, their own weak points, their own unworthiness. In lowliness of mind each had to esteem others better than himself.

The self-abasing that would keep them so lowly amongst their fellow Spokesmen, would keep them from lording it over the people of God. It would keep them free from all traces of that assumption of superiority which raises such a bar between the shepherd and his flock, and makes his carrying out of the golden rule an impossibility: it would keep them from being affected by the approval of others,



whether lookers-on, or members of their own flock. The sole aim of such a worker in the household of God is the good of the people of God, that many may be saved: and in that he rejoices, whether the work is done by himself, or some other person, and leaves the "Well-done" to his Master.

### b. 5.

#### SEEKING NO EARTHLY REWARD

*Introductory.* G. 5. Companions of the suffering Servant.

*Beginning.* vi. 32-35. And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for He is kind toward the unthankful and evil.

*Continuation.* xiv. 12-14. Bidding to a feast.

The last scene in the house showed Theophilus how those followers of Jesus were to treat the people whom He would put under their care. It was a lesson that would appeal to them personally: for they themselves, as friends of Jesus, would have to be given to hospitality; and what they were listening to was Jesus teaching the friend, who had invited Him, how to show hospitality.

The case in question was the giving of a dinner or supper. How was a friend of Jesus to decide about the guests. One way was to leave out of sight altogether the needs of others, and call to the feast only friends or brethren, kinsfolk or rich neighbours; people who would bid him again, and thereby make him a return for what he was doing for them. But that way Jesus forbad. There were to be no class distinctions for His Spokesmen; neither were His friends to look for any earthly reward when doing good. That was the way of the world, and not of servants in the household of

God. Like as they were to rise above the ways of sinners, and do good to those who would not do good to them, so they were to rise above the ways of the world, and do good to those who would not do good to them; for they were followers of the Son of man, Who sought no earthly reward for the good which He did to people, but still went on caring for their needs, although He knew all the time that He would be given up into the hands of men

The way which that friend of Jesus was told to follow when making a dinner or a supper was to call the poor and the maimed, the lame and the blind. No expectation of any earthly reward could possibly be there, marring the deed; nothing but the knowledge that they were in need, and that he, having the means, was doing them good.

It was the last part of the answer to the question, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" that they were hearing; and, as before, they found that it was upon themselves that the fate of their people would depend. This time it was the way in which they treated them. By the forbidden way, that in which the shepherd had an eye to his own advantage, few would be saved. The Master's way was for His servants to seek out the needy, and supply their needs; to care nothing for their own pleasure, profit, or advantage, but to make their people's good their sole aim, regardless of their being poor or repulsive, helpless or useless. No earthly reward were they to expect; but, like as their reward for doing good to their enemies would be great, and they would be sons of the Most High, so their reward for this unselfish work would also be great. They would be numbered amongst the just; that is, amongst those who fear the Lord, and walk in His laws: and, since treating their people thus would be acting in accordance with the will of God, in the resurrection of the just they would receive their reward.

## c. 1.

## ANSWERING THE SUMMONS

xiv. 15-24. The great supper.

In the first section of the chapter, the one in which the followers of Jesus were taught about entering the council-chamber of their Lord, Theophilus was shown men coming from all quarters, and sitting down in the kingdom of God: from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south they came; but from around the house itself none seemed to enter. Why that was, was now explained to him.

His attention was drawn once more to those sitting at the table with Jesus; men who could say, as those outside the narrow door had said, that they had eaten and drunk in His presence. Having heard all that Jesus had been saying, and listened to the instruction He had given about the rules of service in the kingdom of God, they represented men whose general training was finished, and were ready, when summoned, to take their places in the chosen band, and do the work allotted to it in the kingdom of God. Carried away by the thought of the glorious privileges of the servants of God, one of them exclaimed, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

Into the Mount of God the seventy elders of Israel had been led by Moses, and had eaten with him there in the presence of God. Into the presence of God the Prophet like unto Moses would also lead the seventy whom He would choose; and it was as one longing to be of that number that the man had spoken. He would know that of the chosen ones of Israel not one was lost; that in the presence of God they appeared, and did eat and drink (Ex. 24: 11, Sep. Ver.): and he doubtlessly thought that the same happiness would be the lot of all of those whom the Prophet like unto Moses would choose. In answer to him the parable of the great supper was spoken.

The setting of the parable fits in with that of the first

section; for it, too, was spoken as if Jesus were in the city, and in the very house which was to form the gathering place of the Sanhedrin of God. It pictures a great feast set out in a house, all ready for the coming of the guests. They had been asked some time before; and the host, trusting in their acceptance, had sent out his servant to call them to the gathering, and was there awaiting their coming.

With one consent, however, they all began to make excuse; and their excuses, like those of the men, at the close of Chapter G, who ought to have followed Jesus, had all to do with home life. It was of the getting of a piece of land that they spoke; of the oxen for tilling it, and the wife for the home: the three chief stages in building up a home in the country. In the things themselves there was nothing wrong; but they kept men from answering the summons to the feast, and gave rise to states of mind which none could have and still be at the call of Jesus.

The first man recognized the right of earthly things to have a claim upon him. Of necessity, he must go and see the piece of land which he had bought; and he set its claims above the claims of Him Who had called him; a place on earth above a place in the household of God.

Self-will was the ruin of the second; having his own way, instead of bowing to the will of the Lord and answering His call. The fact that he had decided to go and prove the oxen he had bought was excuse enough for him.

The last frankly said that he had lost the power of coming. Home affections, home ties, were too much for him; and however clearly he may have recognized the duty and the privilege of going to the supper, he was unable to obey the call because he had married a wife.

Not one would come when wanted; and it looked as if the feast, and what it represented, would be a failure. But not the slightest change did the Master of the house make to suit the ways and likings of those first-called guests. At once the same servant was sent out into the streets and

lanes of the city to bring in the poor, the maimed, the blind, and the lame to sit in the places of the chosen ones. The order in which those outcasts are now mentioned has been made to correspond with the list of those to whom Christ was sent, so as to make them represent the people amongst whom His Spokesmen were to work: thus teaching the seventy that, if His Spokesmen failed like those men who made excuse, the Master would use the people instead.

The ingathering was made; and still there was room: room, if the Master would only use them, for any of those who had failed Him and had now repented of the step they had taken. But no chance of return was offered them. Rather than have in His house those who had treated Him thus, He filled the empty seats with outcasts drawn from the highways and hedges. From all quarters they came and sat down in the kingdom of God: but for those who let the things of earth keep them from obeying the Master's summons, no place at all was found.

### c. 2.

#### PUPILS OF THE SUFFERING SERVANT

xiv. 25-35. Instructions to those journeying with Jesus.

When the evangelist was telling Theophilus, in the second section of the chapter, about the kind of men Jesus used for the spokesmanship, he set before him the Pattern upon Which they were to be modelled, but about what they themselves had to be and do in order to become like that Pattern, and be fit to speak for Him, and to act in His name, he said nothing. That missing part he now supplied by telling him what followers of Jesus had to do in order to become disciples of Him as the suffering Servant.

The name disciple, or pupil, is still being used to denote men who belong to the school of Christ; men who not merely understand and remember the things that He said and did, but absorb them so thoroughly that they grow into the likeness of their Teacher, and become one with Him

in heart and mind. Before followers of Jesus could be numbered amongst those who were thus receiving special instruction from Him as the suffering Servant, they had to satisfy the tests about which the evangelist now told Theophilus in his usual spectacular way.

In the scene which he set before him, Jesus was still journeying onwards toward Jerusalem, just as He had been pictured in the second section; and with Him were great multitudes all journeying together with Him. Although it was towards Jerusalem that they were journeying with Him, they did not represent pupils of the suffering Servant: for the place of such pupils was by His side; one with Him in heart and mind; treated by Him as His friends. As shown by what He said when He turned and spoke to them, there was still a gap between them and Him; a gap between where they were walking and the place where such pupils of Christ should be: and every one who would become a pupil of the suffering Servant had first of all to cross that gap.

But even then the newcomer would be unable to learn of Him Who went about casting out devils and performing cures, unless he were hating his own father and mother, wife and children, brother and sister, yea, and his own life also. He would, of course, be able to hear the Teacher's words, and see the example that He set: but that would not make him a pupil; one into whose heart that teaching sank, whose life and ways were changing into the likeness of the example set. A pupil of the suffering Servant had to be in touch with his Teacher, and enter into the spirit of His teaching; and that the man could not do unless he were perfectly free to live for others, held back by no tie whatever: for that teaching was to fit him to live and die for the good of others; to fit him for carrying on that work of mercy, for the sake of which the Saviour gave up everything, even His own life.

It was the same with being able to learn of Him as the

Teacher of the will of God. For the fashion of the example which He set was this: He knew, and said, that it was not possible for a prophet to perish out of Jerusalem; yet, because it was His duty, He still made His way thither, faithful unto death. And no man could become His pupil and learn of Him as the suffering Servant, so as to be able to teach for Him, and, in His name, interpret the will of God, unless he were bearing his own cross and walking behind Him, going likewise to a willing death for duty's sake.

The third part of the work of the suffering Servant of God was that of a shepherd tending the weak and helpless of his flock; sheltering and defending them. With this work of His those who were journeying with Him would have been familiar, and would also have known that He was training men to carry it on for Him; so that the meaning of the figures He used would have been plain to them. The tower, about which He spoke, was a tower of refuge, the shelter which the weaker needed: and He spoke to them about it as to men without means, utterly unable of themselves to build such a tower; men who knew that the attempt to do so would be sure to be a failure, and would lay them open to public scorn. In like manner, the king with ten thousand, about whom He told them, the man who had for his foe one with twenty thousand whom he could not possibly overcome, represented the helplessness of any one of them of himself to overcome the powers of evil. Both the builder and the king, when they came to look at their own resources, saw clearly how unable they were, either to provide a refuge, or to drive off the foe: and each one of those multitudes journeying with Jesus had also to be sure that he, too, was unable of himself to do this work for the suffering Servant. For they could not become true pupils of Him, Who is the sole refuge and strength of the people of God, and learn how to shelter and defend, so long as they thought that they could do anything of themselves; so long as they acted as if they themselves were a source of help, indepen-

dent of Jesus. They had to cast away all trust in anything they had, and come in utter helplessness, powerless to shelter, powerless to defend, if they would learn how to carry on His work of shepherding the people of God.

The parable of the salt was spoken as to men who had satisfied those three tests, and had become pupils of the suffering Servant. It taught them about what they must be if they would remain pupils of Him Who gave Himself for others, and, to the end of His career, went about doing good: if they would always be fit to be used as His Spokesmen. Salt is good: but its goodness lies in what it does for other things. It is good because of its health-giving power to human beings, and because of its power to guard against putrefaction and decay—a power which Syrian salt is said to lose by lying exposed to the weather. When that power is lost, its goodness ceases. To all appearance it is still salt, the same as before; but its usefulness is gone, and, fit for nothing, it is cast out. So none can remain pupils of the Doer of good, ever learning of Him and becoming like Him, acting like Him, unless, like the good salt, they have within them, as an unfailing part of their nature, the property of doing good to others; the gift and power of strengthening and supporting the spiritual life, the soul's health of others. As soon as that ceases, as soon as they cease to be an influence for good, to be men to whom people can always turn with confidence, so soon they cease to be Christ's pupils, fit to be used as His Spokesmen. Useless for good, they are cast forth like the salt in the parable.



## CHAPTER M.

ST. LUKE XV. 1.—XVI. 13.

(a). xv. 1, 2. (b). xv. 3-32. (c). xvi. 1-13.

(a).

xv. 1, 2. Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him for to hear him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

(b). 1.

3-7. And he spake unto them this parable, saying, What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance.

2.

8-10. Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbours, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.

Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

## 3.

11-19. And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want.

And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have been filled with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

## 4.

20-24. And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.

## 5.

24-32. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might be. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. But he was angry, and would not go in: and his father came out, and intreated him. But he an-

swered and said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine: and thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but when this thy son came, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

(c).

xvi. 1-13. And he said also unto the disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he was wasting his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, What is this that I hear of thee? render the account of thy stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward. And the steward said within himself, What shall I do, seeing that my lord taketh away the stewardship from me? I have not strength to dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. And calling to him each one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bond, and sit down quickly and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. He saith unto him, Take thy bond, and write fourscore. And his lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely: for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.

He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much.

And he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much.

If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

## CHAPTER M. XV. I.—XVI. 13.

### INSTRUCTIONS TO WELCOMERS

a. xv. 1, 2. b. xv. 3-32. c. xvi. 1-13.

a.

xv. 1, 2. *Introduction.* In the first parable of the kingdom, the mustard seed in the garden grew and flourished; but not unmolested. The birds of heaven came into its branches, and made their abode in them; injuring and defiling them. To preserve the tree, the man, whose garden it was, would have had to drive those birds away, to cleanse the tree, and to repair, as far as possible, the injury done; and that, in a figure, was to be the first duty of those in charge of the people of God. For the coming of the birds of heaven was the coming of evil; and the damaged mustard tree was one of those publicans and sinners with whom the chapter opens—the people who were so plainly in need of being cleansed and restored.

The scene in which those people now appear is the sequel to that other scene in which the seventy were ordained, and sent out two and two before the face of Jesus into every city or place whither He Himself would come. They had gone forth and done their work; and the publicans and sinners, prepared for the coming of the Judge, were all drawing near to hear their sentence pronounced. But it was as the Messenger of the mercy of God that Jesus was there; and the words for which they were waiting were words of pardon and absolution, the bearing

of which to people for Him was to form the distinctive work of the seventy.

After the fashion of this treatise, the mention of those publicans and sinners serves as an introduction to the first two sections of the chapter. The "publicans" were Jews who had wandered away from the fold of Israel to serve the world-power of Rome. Whatever their motives may have been, whether to satisfy their greed for gain, to earn their living more easily, or to follow in the steps of their fathers who had been publicans before them, they had cast away their birth-right; and thus served to represent those who for any cause whatever separated themselves from the kingdom of God.

The "sinners" were people who had openly broken any of the ten commandments. They still belonged to God's people, but were bad subjects of His kingdom. They had missed the high aim set before them, misused the gifts of God, and sunk to a low animal level, the shame of His kingdom.

It was to prepare the seventy for dealing with those two classes of sinners that the instructions in the first two sections were given them; their fitness for acting as messengers of the mercy of God being shown by the way in which they followed those instructions.

The murmuring Pharisees and scribes, and what they said, introduce the last three sections. The Pharisees, as before, stand for what shepherds of God's people are not to be. What their present failing was the evangelist pointed out by allying them with the scribes, the guardians of the public morals, whose aim it was to see that no guilty person escaped condemnation. Those who represent the Messenger of the mercy of God have to be the opposite of those murmurers; and, instead of seeking the condemnation of the sinner, are to seek his pardon and release.

Their complaint about Jesus, that He received sinners, introduces the section which deals with the way in which the work of the seventy for Him as the Messenger of God's

mercy was to be done. What Jesus did is what those who represent Him have to do. He accepted sinners who came to Him that is, penitent sinners—and welcomed them; receiving them gladly: and the aim of the instruction which He now gave His Spokesmen was to teach them to receive sinners for Him in the same way.

His eating with them introduces the section upon the after-treatment of those who have been received. He treated them as being people who were now fit for His company; people with whom He associated willingly and gladly.

Following the plan of this part of the treatise, the first two sections are prepared for by the closing parts of the corresponding chapter upon their training; and the last three, by something in the last three sections of that chapter: moreover, besides developing the instruction given in the beginning of the training, the first two go on with the first part of that given in the first two sections of Chapter L, and the last three with that in the last sub-divisions of the corresponding parts of the last three sections of Chapter G.

All through this chapter the attitude which the seventy were taught to take towards the sinner was that of men who were sinners themselves; men who had indeed found mercy, but being imperfect, needed it still. In the lessons which were given them, some wrong doing of the one in charge, or some failure to do right, was always kept before them. The man lost the sheep; the woman, the piece of silver; the father weakly yielded to his son, and thereby put temptation in his way; whilst the elder brother was in fault throughout.

*Summary.* True Spokesmen of the Messenger of the mercy of God had to be men who would seek the wanderer as earnestly, faithfully, and untiringly as the man sought his lost sheep; and would rejoice over finding it with the same true-hearted joy. They had to be men to whom each soul entrusted to their care would be a precious treasure; men who would seek for the fallen as the woman sought for

her lost piece of silver, treating it as a personal loss, as a treasured adornment lost through her own fault, and not resting until she had found it again.

The way in which they were to treat the sinner was shown by the parable of the prodigal son; the wanderer, sunk deep in vice, in whom were combined the faults of both publicans and sinners. The yearning love of the father, hastening to welcome, forward to forgive, taught them the way in which they, as fathers of their people, were to meet their penitent children; whilst the churlish behaviour of the elder brother made plain to them, by contrast, how they were to treat the penitent sinner when pardoned and restored.

In the closing instruction they were guarded against the fault which showed itself in grudging the use of the fatted calf, by being taught to use the things of earth as stewards of God.

### b. 1.

#### GATHERERS OF THE WANDERERS

*Introductory.* H. c. 1. Prayer.

*Beginning.* vi. 36. Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

*General.* L. 1:1. Workmen of justice. (The narrow door).

*Special.* xv. 3-7. The lost sheep.

The people to whom they would have to go before the Saviour's face are divided into two classes; the place of prominence being given to the class which is represented by the publicans. Publicans were not necessarily all bad-living men, extortioners, and swindlers; but they were all, without exception, branded by the fact that they had entered the service of Rome. They were still Jews; but Jews who had left the fellowship of the people of God: and it was as bearing that common brand of separation that they served as the type of the first class of people the Saviour sought. The

Pharisees, the self-appointed guardians of the people of God, were full of bitterness towards them. They treated them as outcasts; shut the door of repentance against them, and devoted themselves to the rest of the people. And that too would be the temptation of the shepherds of Christ—to cherish and care for the steadfast, the faithful, and true; but as for the troublesome wanderer who turned his back upon them and their ministrations, to leave him to his fate: indifferent so long as the rest were still theirs. Against that temptation the seventy were guarded by the parable of the lost sheep; the sheep which, like the publicans, had left the flock to which it belonged.

The man with the hundred sheep represented themselves as they would afterwards be when put in charge of a flock of Christ. He was by no means a perfect shepherd; for, as they were told, it was he who had lost the sheep. They were always to remember, when dealing with a wanderer, that they themselves were sinners, imperfect, blameworthy.

What the man in the parable afterwards did taught them what they as Spokesmen of Christ would have to do. For us, however, to see the lesson in its fulness, we have to recall some of the instruction which had already been given them in connection with it. According to the plan of the treatise, this section is led up to by the first of the closing parts of the chapter upon the sending of the seventy; the part which is about their being taught to pray as labourers in the harvest of God. The search for the wanderer was to start with prayer. There was, moreover, the rule which had been given them. "Be ye pitiful, as your Father is pitiful"; and it was with hearts full of pity that they were to make search for the lost. The heart of the man in the parable was set upon finding that sheep. Wherever it had wandered he sought it: whether lonely and desolate in the midst of dangers, foodless and failing, whether grazing in forbidden pastures, or joining itself to some other flock, he sought it unceasingly until he had found it. The sight of the one who



had given him such trouble roused neither indignation nor anger: he uttered no reproach, he inflicted no punishment; but, acting as a workman of justice who had passed through the narrow door of love, he helped it with joy upon its homeward way, taking upon himself the whole burden of the wanderer's return, and sparing no pains to restore it to the flock. So deep and great was the joy of that man, that he had to call together his friends and his neighbours to rejoice with him at having found the sheep that was lost. Such had to be the way of each Spokesman of Christ towards any who separated themselves from his flock.

The fault itself, however, is by no means glossed over in the parable. All that that sheep had done was to leave the flock and wander away; and yet it represented a sinner. The separating of itself from the flock was the sin; the willingness to return, repentance: and it was over a penitent schismatic that they were told the joy in heaven would be.

Heaven is God's dwelling-place; and all who are there are one. Its divine oneness spread to the earth when, by the baptism of people by one Spirit into one body, the household of God was established there. Separating from that household, dividing that household, are sins against its unity; sins against heaven, God's kingdom in its perfection, whose oneness it is that is broken. At that stage of the formation of the Church, the breaking of that unity could not take place as pictured in the parable; for schism, such as is there represented, was not then possible, no flock having yet been entrusted to any Spokesman of Christ; so the seventy could only be told what in the future the joy in heaven would be. But now we can use the present tense, and say that the great concern in heaven is always for the wanderer from the fold, the breaker of the unity of the kingdom of God; and that the eager desire there is for the wanderer's return. Great as the joy in heaven is over the ninety and nine faithful and true who keep unbroken the heavenly

law, and need no repentance for having ever wandered away, greater far is the joy over the guilty one who repents, and returning restores the unity of the flock to which he belonged, the unity of the kingdom of God as it is in heaven. That joy the true Spokesman of Christ seeks to increase by gathering the wanderers in.

b. 2.

SEEKERS FOR SINNERS

*Introductory.* H. c. 2. Tireless providers. (The midnight traveller.)

*Beginning.* vi. 37. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged.

*General.* L. 2: 1. Undeterred. (Followers of the suffering Servant).

*Special.* xv. 8-10. The lost piece of silver.

The sinners in the introduction to the chapter represented the second class of people to whom the Saviour would send the seventy; and it was to make them fit to act as His messengers to people in all degrees of vileness that they were given the instruction contained in the parable of the lost piece of silver. Though lost it was still in the house; for those whom it represented are people who fall into sin, but do not separate themselves as the publicans had done. It was not upon the piece of silver, however, that the eyes of the seventy were fixed, but upon the woman; for it was from her that the lesson was drawn which was to fit them for being used as messengers of the mercy of God.

Each little band that would be under their care was to be to them like the ten pieces of silver which formed the head-dress of a woman, and were her glory and her crown. It was one of those pieces that was lost in the darkness and the dirt; and it was she who had lost it. There was no getting away from the dreadfulness of the lesson. Whenever any one fell into sin, and was thereby lost, blame would rest upon the Spokesman of Jesus to whom that person had been entrusted. The knowledge of that could not fail to make

them very forbearing with the fallen; very slow to sit in judgment upon them: for it would be sinners dealing with sinners; the faulty seeking to repair their fault. "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged."

The woman unable to rest content whilst a single piece remained lost, the woman getting the light she needed and searching unceasingly until that piece was found, was the picture to the seventy of the kind of men they had to be if they were ever to be fit to act as welcomers for Jesus. What they were to be and do they had already partly learned. The prayer prevailing for the friend that came out of the midnight darkness had taught them how to get their empty hands filled, and be able to supply the needs of the sinner when found; the prayer for the Holy Spirit, how to get the light and guidance and help the search required; the example of God's suffering Servant, untiring in His work of mercy, how they were to labour faithfully to the end.

As in the other parable, the finding of the piece of silver meant the repentance of the sinner; but in the searcher's joy, so full and deep, there was mingled the confession of her own misdoing and joy at her own fault repaired. "Rejoice with me," she said, "for I have found the piece which I lost."

This parable also closes with a vision of the unseen world. They were to be Christ's representatives; the representatives of Him Who had sent them before His face with the solemn assurance that, "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth Me; and he that rejecteth Me rejecteth Him that sent Me"; and to them as representatives of God this closing part of the lesson was given—"There is joy before the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

The angels of God, the messengers by means of whom His laws were given, are regarded here as being His representatives; and the person who breaks those laws is regarded as sinning before those messengers of God who pro-

claimed them. Like as there would be joy in heaven over the sinner that repented for having sinned against it, so there is joy before the messengers of God over one who has repented for having sinned before them by breaking the laws they brought. For messengers of Christ to have that joy before them, they must be like the woman in the parable; devoted seekers for sinners, faithful followers of the suffering Servant Who gave His life to rescue and to save.

## b. 3.

## UNCONDEMNING

*Introductory.* H. 3. All things given to the Son.

*Beginning.* vi. 37. Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.

*General.* G. 3:1:2. Standing with the Redeemer. (The Transfiguration.)

*Special.* xv. 11-19. The lost son. (Sin and the penitent sinner.)

The rest of the introduction to the chapter is made up of a picture of Jesus receiving sinners and eating with them, and the Pharisees and scribes murmuring at Him for so doing. To the Pharisees all sinners were the same, whether penitent or impenitent: all were alike unclean people with whom servants of God should have nothing to do: and Jesus, by receiving them, was, in their eyes, treating lightly the breaking of God's laws. They were still examples of what Spokesmen of Christ should neither be nor do. The answer to their murmuring was the parable of the prodigal son; the parable by which the seventy were taught how to treat a tree in the garden of the Lord in which the birds had taken up their abode, defiling and destroying it.

The first part of the parable is connected with that part of the scene upon the Mount of the Transfiguration where the two, who spoke to Jesus about His departure which He would accomplish at Jerusalem, were seen standing at His side. By Jesus' side, speaking of His death and atonement,

is the place of those who would turn a sinner from the error of his way; and it was as if the seventy had taken their stand there and were having pointed out to them the kind of people to whom they were to go as representatives of Him to Whom all things were given by the Father, that they were shown this picture of one of those for whom the Saviour died, those whom He wants to be saved.

In the parable, the place which would be theirs as guardians of the children of God was filled by the father. Here again they were represented by one who was blameworthy and imperfect. The man gave way to his son; and, by yielding, left him open to temptation. Soon the son forsook his home; and the father, without condemning himself could not condemn him for his desertion: for, by giving up to him his share of the property, he had ceased providing for him as a father, and had thus himself begun the severance.

It was upon the son, however, that their eyes were especially fixed. He combined in himself both of the types of wrong-doers found in the introduction to the chapter: for leaving his home classed him with the publicans; and his course of vice, with the sinners. Wanting to be his own master, to be free from the restraint of his father's presence, from the irksomeness of home surroundings and influences, he went into a far country; and there completed his severance from home by joining himself to a citizen of that foreign land. His substance he had already wasted in riotous living. Lower and lower he sank; till so foul did his tastes grow that he longed to be filled with the same food that the swine, the type of fleshly lusts, did eat. A wretched outcast, it was no one's concern whether he lived or died. No one helped him; no one cared for him. He was left to perish by those amongst whom he was, as unfeelingly as publicans and sinners were left to perish by the Pharisees and scribes, and as such sinners are still by their successors.

Who brought about the change in him, or what means

were used, the parable does not say: for what the seventy were being shown was the kind of sinner that Jesus received—a sinner in the state in which they were to receive him in His name. They would know, however, from what they had been taught, that he was not allowed to wander and perish unsought. However far such people may wander, however low they may sink, the servants of the Saviour must seek them as their Master's treasures, and follow them as the prayers of the father had assuredly followed his wandering, fallen son in that far-distant land.

The change that took place in him was the same as that which takes place in a madman when he comes to his right mind. He came to himself; and saw how vile he was, and how loathsome his surroundings: and the heart of the swine-feeder, humbled and sad, turned to the only one who would surely care for him, the only one on earth of whose love he was sure. He thought of his old home, and of the life there; and he made up his mind to forsake his present life, and to return humbly confessing his sins, his schism and his lusts—the wrong he had done in leaving his home, and the wrong in breaking the laws of righteousness which his father, as God's representative, had taught him, and in which he had trained him. No shadow of a claim did he have; nothing to support him but his trust in his father's love. So deep, indeed, was his sense of unfitness, that he no longer felt worthy to be counted as a son. If he could only be received as a hired servant, and dwell once more in his father's house, in its purity and its love, he would be content. And that was their picture of a penitent sinner as Jesus receives him.

## b. 4.

## RELEASING

*Introductory.* H. 4. The good Samaritan.

*Beginning.* vi. 38. Release, and ye shall be released.

*General.* G. 4:1:2. Cherishing. (The pleading father.)

*Special.* xv. 20-24. The forgiving father.

This section of the chapter taught Theophilus as usual about the actual doing of the work; and showed him how Spokesmen of Christ were to carry out that part of His mission which the prophet had called proclaiming release to captives. The son, returning penitent, was one of the captives whom the seventy and their successors would have to release; for he was a type of the kind of sinner that Jesus receives: whilst the father and his yearning love was an example of how they were to give release in Jesus' name.

It was the same kind of love that they had seen in the father who had poured out his heart in prayer to Jesus, and told Him about the enslavement of his son by the evil one. There could have been nothing likesome in the look of the prodigal son as he came from the vileness of his wasted life, travel-stained, wretched and weary: but the father, watching for the first signs of return, saw only that the child of his prayers was coming; that there in the distance was the one whom he wanted home. There was no waiting till the son, who had so wilfully broken up the unity of the home, should be found at the door, humbly knocking; nor till he, who had despised his precepts and lived in iniquity, should have regained for himself a character for uprightness: but whilst his son was yet a great way off, the father ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. Encircled by that loving embrace the son confessed his sins, and awaited his fate.

Of the pardon itself which he received the parable says nothing. About that Theophilus had been taught when he was shown a father laying before Jesus the state of his son,

a captive of evil, and Jesus forgiving a helpless man who had been laid at His feet: whilst about its giving, he had been taught by the sight of the good Samaritan and his work of mercy. What he had still to be told about was the release which accompanies pardon, following after it; the release about which they had been taught in the rule, "Release, and ye shall be released." That is why no mention is made of the washing of the welcomed one: merely the things which, by their symbolic teaching, assured Theophilus about the absolution, or release, of the sinner.

First there was the long robe put on the penitent sinner, covering him to the very feet; so that no sign, or trace, of his past bad life was to be seen: the best robe in the house it was; for the pardon had made him pure and spotless, fit to be treated as the most highly honoured guest would be, respected by all. Then on his hand was placed the signet ring, in token that he had been freed from the penalty for having forsaken his home, and had been restored to the sonship he had lost. And shoes were put on his feet, to show that he was no longer a captive, a slave to the sins he had committed; but was one of the free people of God. Then came the command to bring forth the calf, the fatted calf, and kill it; the call to the household to rejoice at the glorious reality of the pardon and the absolution which had been given: for the son, who, by forsaking his home, had become dead to it and to its life, that son, restored, was living again; he who was lost in the land of sin and uncleanness had been found.

"Release, and ye shall be released." Fully and freely the father had released his son from every penalty for his misdoings: fully and freely, as Jesus had promised, that father would be released by God from the penalty of his own misdoing in weakly yielding to his son, and occasioning his fall.



## b. 5.

## ENCOURAGING

*Introductory.* H. 5. The one thing needful.

*Beginning.* vi. 38. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.

*General.* G. 5:1:2. Sinking self. (The little child.)

*Special.* xv. 24-32. The elder brother.

In the last part of the parable the seventy were taught about the after-treatment of those whom they would release in Christ's name; penitent sinners, of whom the prodigal son, who had forsaken his home and lived in the grossest vice, was an example. Although forgiven, released, and restored, he would still feel that there was a bar between himself and those whom he had shocked by his misdoings. The truer and deeper his repentance, the more would that bar be felt: for it grows from the sinner's loathing for his sin, and his loathing for himself; and from the feeling that he is unfit for the company of those who have not fallen as he had. He cannot mingle with them freely, for he feels that he is different from them; and the thought is ever haunting him that they know it and feel it too. So he shrinks from his fellow-Christians, too shamefaced to take the place which is now his by right: the right of one whose sins have been blotted out; who has been released, and restored to the liberty of the glory of the children of God. That bar has to be taken away; the timid, shrinking heart cheered and encouraged; the shamefacedness removed, and the restored one made to feel that he is again in perfect oneness with the people of God: that he can share in their happiness, and take part in their works of purity and love, sure that none are looking askance at him.

The removal of that bar from the heart of the penitent begins with the glad welcome with which this part of the

parable opens; the joy at the home-coming of the prodigal son which showed itself in the music and dancing that filled the house. For the voices were all in unison; and the dance was the circling dance in which every one joined: showing that with one heart and mind they were all rejoicing with him, and that, drawn by the warmth of the welcome, he too was rejoicing with them. Without that welcome, so warm and bright, taking away all doubt and fear, the penitent son could never have felt perfectly at home, free from the shadow of any bar between himself and the rest of the household. It was essential for his full restoration; for the planting of his feet firmly once more upon the heavenly way. The model, however, which had been given to the seventy was not the welcome of a Martha fussing over many things for the comfort of those who had come with Jesus; but that of Mary bringing to the shrinking guests that one thing needful which she had sought and received from Jesus as she sat at His feet—His comfortable words encouraging, drawing; His sympathy and love, changing sorrow into joy, the loneliness of the sinner into the communion of saints.

But there is another bar to the completion of this work for Christ; a bar which is raised, not by the penitent, but by servants of Christ: by men, like the Pharisees, who object to penitent sinners being treated as they had been treated by Him when He ate and drank with those whom He had received as if He were being honoured by their company. With such men are to be classed those who grudge at death-bed repentances; unwilling that people, who have wasted their lives in evil-doing, should be treated like themselves, who have never openly transgressed at any time.

From the teaching which the seventy received, it is clear that what makes it so hard to give to the penitent the welcome they need is the difficulty of sinking self; of setting self aside altogether, and being wholly and sincerely devoted to the welfare of others. It is an ever-present diffi-

culty; an unceasing hindrance to the work of the servant of Christ for others. Self is constantly asserting itself, wrapped up in excuses suitable to the occasion. In connection with their fellow-labourers, they had seen it making itself felt as zeal to excel; and had heard it rebuked by the lesson drawn from the little child: in connection with penitent sinners, it had shown itself in the Pharisees' indignation at the Saviour's setting aside of good living people and making much of those who had done evil; and was now rebuked by the sight of the elder brother and his surly scorn, so sickening in its meanness, as it stood out, black and repulsive, against the brightness of the father's love.

He too had been in the field; but, unlike his younger brother who had come from feeding swine in the fields of a citizen of that far country, he came from the field belonging to his own home, and from doing work that it was his duty to do. As he drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing; but as soon as he knew that it was for the penitent sinner that with one heart and voice they were rejoicing, and that also for him the fatted calf had been sacrificed, he was angry and would not go in. No kindly welcome had he to give; no thankfulness for his brother's safe return: but full of anger, he stayed outside, unable to join in the welcome of love: for it seemed to him as if in that household no notice was taken of one who was faithful and obedient, but only of the wayward and bad-living. But, as pointed out to him by his father, there was no reason at all why he should have been jealous of his brother. Never having left home, it was impossible for there to be rejoicings over his return; and as for his not having received even a kid, everything in the house was his, having been given him by his father. But even if pity and love did not move him, it was his duty as a brother to have joined in the welcome: for it was his own brother who had been dead and was alive again; his own brother who had been lost and was found. And in the welcome given, his father had really acted for

him; having done with his goods what he himself ought to have done to encourage the forgiven one to take his place in the household to which he belonged.

And there the parable leaves him. Within the house, brightness and joy; the younger brother and the rest of the household rejoicing together: outside the house, alone in his gloom, the elder brother and none regarding him; the same measure that he had meted to his brother being meted to him again.

## C.

## STEWARDS OF GOD

## xvi. 1-13. The unfaithful steward.

The evangelist closed his outline with a parable, bearing upon the conduct of the man who grudged what was done for his erring brother, and five maxims drawn from it. It was to "the pupils," the men whom Jesus was training for His service, that these things were told to prepare them for being used as stewards; that is, as managers of households, in charge of what was not their own: and the parable was about a rich man's steward.

There were two parts to this steward's duties: one to handle the wealth entrusted to him, the other to deal with his lord's debtors; and in both he failed. His lord's goods he wasted; and notice of dismissal was served upon him for unfaithfulness to his trust: his power of remitting debts he used in easing the burden of his lord's debtors; but for his own advantage, so that he might be received into their houses when his stewardship ended, and not for the glory of his lord.

For this latter mis-doing the rich man commended him; he had acted wisely, and had shown forethought and prudence: but our Lord pronounced him an unrighteous steward; and although, in the lesson, He made use of the wisdom the man had shown, it was in connection with things of this world, and not the power of remitting debts.

Before giving His pupils their lesson, Jesus led up to it by contrasting sons of this world and sons of the light with regard to wisdom. "The sons of this world," He told them, "are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light." Worldlings, whose lives and hopes are bounded by this world, are more ready to look ahead and provide for their future well-being and happiness than the enlightened, whose lives range far away into the land of unfading light, the land of homes eternal, are to provide for their glorious well-being and endless happiness.

They would be tempted to look upon their work as belonging to this life only, as if their connection with any one ceased when that person passed out of this world; and to give no heed to the world to come, to the time when they would meet their flocks again in heaven. And the Lord's command to them as sons of the light was to use the earthly with a view to the heavenly. "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." It was what the elder brother ought to have done to the prodigal son. Acts of kindness; help to make a new start in life; encouragement; a warm welcome; the sparing of nothing which would enable the restored one to take his place unshrinkingly among the people of God; all these, although done with things of earth, would be treasure laid up for them in heaven. For, as the Saviour's command shows, in those eternal abodes, when things earthly have passed away, such acts of kindness will be remembered, and the doers of them recognized and known; and the joy of the servants of God in that place of bliss will be swelled by the gratitude and the love which the redeemed will give into their bosoms "with good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over."

The five maxims drawn from the parable, having been spoken generally to "the pupils," were for other parts of the service of Jesus as well; but they specially apply to the

five sections of this chapter, taken in order, and are directions for the well-doing of the Welcomers' work.

Men like the unfaithful steward do not, as a rule, become so glaringly careless and untrustworthy all at once. They begin gradually, by being unfaithful in little things; and so it was about care of little things that the Lord spoke. Nothing whatever entrusted to his servants for the good of His people was to be treated carelessly by them.

Like the rule which belonged to the first section, "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful," there is nothing about retribution in the first maxim. The punishment for scattering abroad what would be entrusted to them as stewards had been mentioned in the parable,—dismissal from the stewardship,—and the maxim only dealt with the way to faithful stewardship; "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much."

The little things would be connected with the care of a flock; some of the things its members would need: and the man with the hundred sheep would have been one who was careful about such matters. Human frailty, however, is bound to show itself; and from some oversight of his, something he had done, or left undone, one of the sheep had turned from him and the rest of the flock, and had forsaken them. But as soon as ever he found that he had let one of them wander away, he spared no trouble or toil to repair his mistake; but sought that sheep unceasingly until he found it, and, taking it upon his shoulders, restored it to his flock. Faithful in a very little, he had shown himself faithful in much—in the ingathering of the separated, the unity of his flock.

The next maxim is also a general one: "He that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much." It was drawn from the letting off of parts of debts which caused the man to be condemned as an unrighteous steward.

In its application the debts would be debts to God—sins, either evil done, or good left undone; and being unrighteous

as the steward had been would be getting people to regard them as not being so bad as they really are. A man, from this point of view, is being unrighteous in a very little when he countenances jests at evil; treats wrongdoing in the least degree as excusable; or glosses it over in any way, whether in himself, or in others. Such views lead on to belittling the sins that people have committed, and condoning their offences: and the man, if put in charge of others, will end by doing what the woman had done; and, by losing souls entrusted to him, will prove himself unfit to be a Spokesman of Christ.

The remaining three maxims have all to do with unrighteous mammon, with the use of things of the earth; and are drawn from the way in which the unfaithful steward treated the wealth entrusted to him. They are all three personal in form; and are such as would have been given to men to prepare them for the spokesmanship. Here, of course, they apply especially to those seeking to become Welcomers for Jesus.

"If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon who will commit to your trust the true riches?" It was by his careless handling of his lord's goods, unrighteous mammon, that the steward had shown his unfitness to be used any more in the stewardship; and the same test of fitness was to hold for stewards, or overseers, of households of Christ. The failure might take place whilst in the lowest order; or in private life; like the father who did not rule his own household well and weakly divided his goods; but the verdict would be the same: that such are unfit to be trusted with the mysteries of God.

The next thing for them to remember about their office was that they were stewards; men who have to handle the goods of another as if they were their own. It was still from the things of earth that the lesson was being drawn; and in the father's welcome of the prodigal son, it is from his use of the things of earth now belonging to the elder

brother—the robe and the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf, and the means for rejoicing, things due to returned penitents,—that we can see what the faithful use of them would be.

But it was by warnings of penalties that the lesson was being driven home to them. The man who had wasted what belonged to his lord was a steward, and, as a steward, would have been paid; but having been found unfaithful, he was dismissed without a word being said about the wages due to him. Jesus was making them stewards, and they too would receive wages; the wages which He pays through the gifts of His people: and His warning to them was, “If ye have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?” If they failed in their duty as stewards, they too must not expect to get the wages due to them.

Lastly, they were to remember that it was God Whose stewards they were to be; that they were His mysteries that would be entrusted to them; and that to Him they were to look, and His will alone they were to do. Grasping for earthly wealth would be their ruin as stewards of God. It was that which had caused the unfaithful steward to lose all regard for right and wrong, and even use his power of remitting debts as a means of gain. It was because the prodigal son had been treated better than he had, and had been feasted upon the fatted calf, that the elder brother had grown so angry, and cut himself off from all share in the return. And in like manner, being devoted to wealth, to the things of this world, would unfit them for the service of God. The two services could not go together; and for them to remain in the service of God, that of mammon had to be given up. Men greedy of filthy lucre were unfit to be over households of Christ, stewards of the mysteries of God.



## CHAPTER N.

ST. LUKE XVI. 14.—XVII. 19.

(a). xvi. 14. (b). xvi. 15.—xvii. 10. (c). xvii. 11-19.

(a).

xvi. 14. And the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things; and they scoffed at him.

(b). 1.

15. And he said unto them, Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

2.

16-18. The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall. Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery.

3.

19-31. Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day: and a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried.

And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish.

And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us. And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. But Abraham saith, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead.

## 4.

xvii. 1-4. And he said unto his disciples, It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble. Take heed to yourselves.

If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

## 5.

5-10. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea; and it would have obeyed you.

But who is there of you, having a servant plowing or keeping sheep, that will say unto him, when he is come in from the field, Come straightway and sit down to meat; and will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank the servant because he did the things that were commanded? Even so ye also, when ye shall have done

all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do.

(c).

11-19. And it came to pass, as they were on the way to Jerusalem, that he was passing through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices, saying, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go and show yourselves unto the priests.

And it came to pass, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God; and he fell upon his face at his feet, giving him thanks.

And he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger?

And he said unto him, Arise, and go thy way: thy faith hath saved thee.

## CHAPTER N. XVI. 14.—XVII. 19.

### INSTRUCTIONS TO TEACHERS

a. xvi. 14. b. xvi. 15.—xvii. 10. c. xvii. 11-19.

a.

xvi. 14. *Introduction.* The next part of Jesus' mission as the Christ was to proclaim recovering of sight to the blind; and it was to enable His servants to carry on that work for Him, and make people see and know what they ought to be and do, that He gave the seventy the instructions outlined in this chapter. Those amongst whom their work would lie were people who had passed through the Helpers' hands, and had therefore been baptized and made members of the kingdom of God; and their aim would be to give them that which was so needful for their becoming good and useful members of it—that clear, true knowledge of its laws upon which its full and free rule in their hearts depends. It was with this work of implanting the rule of the kingdom of God in people's hearts that the second parable of the kingdom was dealing when it spoke of the woman casting leaven into three measures of meal:—leaven, that living organism which is the same at all times and in all ages, in all places and in all circumstances, type of the unchangeable law of God. All, at one time or another, have to be made to see: and into every one under their charge they would have to cast that leaven which is always the same. For this to be done age after age Spokesmen of Christ, as the Sanhedrin of the kingdom of God, would have to make a hedge around the law so that no inroads

could be made upon it, no one could tamper with it, add to it, take from it, or change it in any way whatever; and they would have to teach it in its entirety.

In the introduction to the corresponding chapter, what unfits men for such work as this was represented generally by a dumb devil; in this chapter the cause of unfitness specially dealt with is love of money. From it, as from a root, sprang the evils which spoil the Pharisees for teaching the people of God, and made them scoff at the instructions which they heard Jesus give to the seventy.

The Pharisees, as bad guides of the people, are again examples of what Spokesmen of Christ are not to be; their unfitness this time being caused by their covetousness, which made them servants of mammon. It was this greediness which led to their scoffing at Jesus and His maxims, and made them a type of those who do not bow wholeheartedly to the laws of God the Father, and the rulings and teachings of Jesus.

The five sayings at which the Pharisees scoffed provide introductions to the five sections of the chapter taken in order. In the first two of these sections Theophilus was shown the kind of teaching the seventy received to keep them from being like the Pharisees, unfit to be teachers of the law of God; and in the remaining three what they needed for their work. Moreover, after the fashion of the foregoing chapter, the first two sections are prepared for by the two closing parts of the chapter upon the training of Teachers. The last three are each made up of two parts: one of which continues a direction given them in the beginning of their instructions; and the other, the lesson contained in the corresponding part of the chapter upon their general training: their subject-matter, as before, being suggested by something in the corresponding section of the former chapter upon their training.

*Summary.* It was as being men of God, men sent by God to make known His will, that these instructions were given

to the seventy to teach them what they had to flee, and what they had to follow, if they would act as Christ's Teachers.

They learned that they were not to be like those money-loving Pharisees, who thought that all was well if they were walking uprightly in the sight of men; but were to be men who always walked in the sight of Him unto Whom all things are open. Neither were they to be men who would give heed to those who would change the law of God; for, as shown by Christ's ruling upon the re-marriage of the divorced, that law was to remain forever unchanged.

The way in which they would have to represent Him as the Teacher was by giving people His own teaching; such as that contained in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus about the two paths a man can take, the way of death and the way of life; the hopelessness of expecting to change from the one to the other after leaving this world; the vital importance of the Scriptures, their mighty power to awaken, change and guide, to turn people from the way of death to the way of life.

After that came instructions dealing with the giving of the teaching. It had to be given with the utmost care, and given in love; a love which could unceasingly forgive even those who clashed with them.

As for the way in which they were to regard themselves in their office of Teachers, that was as humble servants of Jesus; weaklings; useless slaves, who at the best were but unprofitable.

A case illustrating the two ways of justifying themselves closes the chapter.

## b. 1.

## WALKING BEFORE GOD

*Introductory.* I. c. 1. The leaven of the Pharisees.

*Beginning.* vi. 39. Can the blind guide the blind? shall they not both fall into a pit?

*General.* L. 1:2. Obedient.

*Special.* xvi. 15. The Pharisees justifying themselves before men.

The instructions which Theophilus had received about acting as a Teacher were established by extracts taken from the instructions which Jesus gave to the seventy. The first of these was very short. It had to do with the Pharisees: and about their unfitness he had already been informed in the closing part of the chapter upon the training of the seventy to be Teachers—that where Jesus had warned His pupils against the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Men who say and do in private the things they condemn in public are unfit for Teachers in the kingdom of God. Acting a part is fatal to their usefulness. They have to be what they profess to be, followers and servants of Jesus: believing and holding all the truths entrusted to them, and doing themselves what they tell others to do; knowing that the things which they secretly say and uphold will show themselves in their teaching, and in their lives and examples as well.

The work of the seventy as Teachers, however, would not be done by merely telling people what they should be and do in order to be fit for the coming of the Lord. They were to be guides of the people; leaders of the people: going before them along the path that was to be followed; showing in their own lives and examples the things which they taught their people to do. To do this they had to see the way clearly; so that walking safely themselves past all pitfalls and dangers, they could also lead their people in safety.

The kind of man for such a post would be one of those

of whom the first maxim held good, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much": one who aimed at perfection; neglected nothing; slighted nothing; was faithful in everything. What makes it impossible for men of the Pharisee type, in spite of their minute exactness, ever to be fit for it is that they are blind to something essential for being thus faithful—their relationship to God. The Pharisees justified themselves before men; holding all to be well if they observed the law of God according to men's views of it. As if it were mankind that decreed the standard of right and wrong, and man could make and unmake the moral law, and as if the decision about righteousness of conduct lay with men, they rested satisfied with what they did so long as men approved; or, at least, did not condemn.

Christ's Teachers recognize no human standard of righteousness whatever, whether of individuals, or of bodies of people. Those who turn to men as the authority for right and wrong, the authority for what should, or should not be done in the kingdom of God, are as useless for guides to the people as blind men would be to the blind in ordinary life. Men judge by outward appearances, but God sees the heart; sees the motives; sees and knows what the deed really is: and things that among men are accounted good and worthy, noble and grand, are abominations before God; contrary to the law which He has given; opposed to the righteousness which He has decreed.

It is to Him as the sole Lawgiver, the only Authority upon righteousness, that Teachers in His kingdom have to turn. As being ever in His presence, they are to live; walking in His ways, listening to Him, bowing to His will as made known by Jesus; reverencing and obeying the Son of man, the Word of God. They follow after righteousness; but it is the righteousness of God, and not of men: doing His will as stedfastly and unswervingly as those who came from the east and the west, the north and the south, and



sat down in the kingdom of God, obedient to the call of God, faithful and true.

b. 2.

GUARDING GOD'S LAWS

*Introductory.* I. c. 2. God-fearing.

*Beginning.* vi. 40. The disciple is not above his teacher: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher.

*General.* L. 2:2. Faithful unto death.

*Special.* xvi. 16-18. The unfailing law.

One of the duties of the Sanhedrin of the Jews was to make a hedge around the law, and keep it unaltered; and that was also to be one of the duties of the Sanhedrin of the kingdom of God, of those responsible for the interpretation of its laws, for the upholding of its ways. The carrying out of the instructions given about this furnished another of the marks of fitness for being Teachers in God's kingdom. What they were told was based upon the second of the rules at which the Pharisees had scoffed, "He that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much."

Another proverbial saying was also given them for their guidance; "A pupil is not above the teacher; but every one when he is perfected shall be as his teacher." This saying kept before them the fact that they could never raise any one above their own level; that the highest point to which any pupil of theirs could rise, whilst he remained their pupil, would be the height which they themselves were keeping; and also that that height was limited by the teacher under whom they themselves sat. He from whom they learned had to be the highest and best, if they, in their turn, would raise their people to the highest level possible. What they were to teach their people came from God. It was to be found in the law given through Moses; in the revelations made through the prophets; and, after John the Baptist's time, in the laws and ways of the kingdom of God as taught by Jesus. Under Jesus, Moses, and the

prophets they were to sit. From them they were to learn.

What Moses had said about the law which was given through him—that no man was to add to it, or to take from it—applied to all that was entrusted them to teach. It was to be always the same: passed from man to man unchanged, like the yeast which is always the same, no matter how much it may spread, the same living force, working in the same way and according to the same law, to which everything to be leavened has to submit. People would try to modify it, lighten it, set it aside; and from being unrighteous in a very little would become unrighteous in much. They would force and wrest the teaching of Jesus, the law, and the prophets; violence even would be used to make its upholders yield: but true Teachers of Christ nothing was to move; they were to yield to none. God they were to fear, but not man. They were to be true to the Son of man in the face of all the world; to seek and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit Who spake by the prophets; through Whom the true interpretation of the law would come to them; through Whom they were to teach.

One thing, however, the seventy had still to know; and that was what freedom they themselves, as the Sanhedrin of God's kingdom, would have in dealing with its laws. Would they ever be allowed to modify them to suit the needs of humanity, or the changing circumstances of the times? The answer to this question is found in what Jesus said about the things which even then were going on around them. People were violently entering into the kingdom of God, and instead of bowing to its laws and being moulded by them, were trying to change them to suit themselves; and His judgment upon the folly and hopelessness of such efforts was, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fail." The law of God cannot become a dead letter. Man cannot alter it.

In "the law and the prophets" laws are to be found which are plainly temporal; such as the ceremonial laws

which foreshadowed the work of the Messiah, and civil laws for conditions which have passed away: but there are also laws which neither time nor place affect;—the moral law of God. The laws, too, which the Son of God laid down for His unending kingdom are for all time. No matter who may agree to modify a law of God, no matter what the changed circumstances of mankind may be, the God-given standard is not to be lowered in the slightest; not the smallest particle of the law is to be allowed to fail. Like leaven it is to be unchangeable; the same in all ages, in all places, amongst all sorts and conditions of men.

One example Jesus gave them; a test case it might be called: the re-marriage of the divorced. In spite of all that people might say or do, the marriage-law of God was to remain unaltered. Marriage makes two people one, and a divorce cannot part them. Death alone can undo that bond. No concession in favour of the innocent party did Jesus make; no notice at all did He take of the reasons for the divorce; but, without any exception whatever, He flatly declared the re-marriage of a divorced person to be adultery. Neither man's opinion, nor Moses' permission, could change that law of God.

As with that case, so with them all. The law of the kingdom of God in its every detail is unchangeable; and those who teach for Christ have, without fear or favour, to teach it as He taught it; following the example which He set when He declared "I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

## b. 3.

## HAVING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

*Introductory.* I. 3. Lamps for Christ.

*Beginning.* vi. 41. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

*General.* G. 3:2:2. The Sun of righteousness.—Reverencing the oracles of God.

*Special.* xvi. 19-31. The rich man and Lazarus.

According to the plan of the treatise, the instruction given in this section had to do with making them true representatives of the Teacher Whose wisdom was greater than that of Solomon, and Whose words of warning were more weighty than those of Jonah. They were to be like lamps giving out the light which came from Jesus; and giving it unaltered just as it came from Him: and for that reason they had to see and know things exactly as He made them known, and as He wanted them taught. To enable them to act thus for Him, as His Teachers amongst those who were baptized, He showed them how to read men's lives as He reads them, and to regard the oracles of God as He regards them.

He set two lives before them, side by side; one, the kind of life which, to men with a beam in their eye, seems to be the easiest for right living; the other, the kind which they consider drives men to crime: one, the life of a rich man, who had everything that money could buy, living in mirth and splendour every day; the other, that of a poverty-stricken man, full of sores, whose height of good living was to be filled with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. The command to the rich in Deut. 15:11 is, "Thou shalt surely open thy hands to thy brother who is poor, and to him that is in need upon thy land"; but the poor man, lying at that rich man's gate, got only the waste. As for his loathsome sores, the dogs attended to them, and did

the work of mercy which the rich man ought to have done. There was one thing about him, however, to which their attention was specially drawn at the very beginning of the description given of him; that which was pointed out by the name given him in the parable—Lazarus, God is my help. He was one of those who trust in God, and, meekly bowing to His will, bear their lot with patience.

Such were the two lives which Jesus set before the men who were to speak in His name, and teach the people the way of life: lives typical of those with which they would have to deal; lives about which they would have to teach their people clearly and plainly, and about which they themselves therefore had also to be clear.

Our blurred vision fails altogether to see what such lives really are. The span of life is too short for us to trace their course, and see the end to which they lead: so Jesus continued those two lives after death; and, by making use of the popular views of the after-death state, showed what they really are.

At death, each is pictured as going straight forward along the path which he was travelling during his earthly life. The rich man, when he died, was put into the earth upon whose good things his heart was set. He had reached his goal. But no comfort or rest could he find in that world for which he had lived. There, in the depths of Hades, he dwelt in misery and woe; craving for the least touch of the pity he never had shown. When the poor man died, the man whose help was in God, whose life had been lived by faith in God, messengers of God, who encompass such lives, carried him up into Abraham's bosom: that is, into the closest fellowship with the father of the faithful; into the depths of the peace and the happiness of those who walk by faith in God.

It was, after all, but the harvest of their lives on earth that they were reaping. The rich man, during his life, had received the good things of the earth, but had not used

them as he ought. Unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon, he had spent it freely upon himself, and had given away only the things he did not want;—the crumbs which fell from his table. For himself he had lived; for selfish pleasures; for present happiness: and when, at death, earthly wealth fell from his grasp, no spiritual treasures replaced it. The passing happiness had vanished; and nothing but self remained, self in misery. His life had been one of those highly esteemed among men, but in the sight of God, an abomination; and from the realization of the loss of God's favour his torment came.

Evil were the things that Lazarus had received; but he had made a right use of them. Hardship and suffering, sickness and pain had drawn him closer to God in Whom, in his helplessness, his trust had been put; and when, at last, sorrow and care had passed away, he entered into the fulness of that comfort and peace of which, in life, but the foretaste had been his.

Then came a revelation of the unseen world, without the ever-present knowledge of which none could teach the law of God as Jesus taught it; none could urge it with the Saviour's yearning earnestness. A change in the parable marked this new part of the lesson. Abraham was no longer made to speak in the same personal way to the wretched being who was reaping the fruits of his misspent life; so that Christ's hearers could not possibly take what followed as applying solely to him, as if he alone had sinned past all forgiveness. It applied to all; and all had to know it. After death an impassable gulf lies between the lives of the wicked and the lives of the good. None can leave the abode of bliss to minister to the lost, to relieve, or to cheer; and what is more terrible still, never can any one leave that state of misery and find a place amongst the happy people of God. The day of grace closes at death. If a change is ever to be made from one life to the other, it has to be made in this world before death comes. The person may not have

got very far upon the heavenward way; no farther, perhaps, than the man whose light in life was "God is my help": but a start he has to have made; his feet have to be on the path which leads to "Abraham's bosom."

The rest of the lesson was given by means of the survivors of that ungodly family; the five brethren towards whom the eyes of the seventy were now turned. All were living the same kind of life the rich man had lived; all were following the same path of doom: and Theophilus had to know what instructions Jesus gave those who were to speak for Him, so that, as His representatives, they would be able to arouse such people, to win them, and to save.

As the word "therefore" shows, it was because there could be no change from one state to another in the next world, because there was no hope for any after-death change for those who to the very end of their days had wasted life's opportunities on earth, that the man in the parable made his plea that Lazarus should be sent to testify as an eye-witness to those worldly-living people of what would happen to them if they did not change their ways, and walk in the law of God. The answer of Abraham to him was, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." But the rich man himself had had them too; and they had wrought no change in his life. The "sign of Jonah" had not moved him. So he prayed for something which would have, as he thought, a more powerful effect. "Nay, father Abraham"; he replied, "but if one go to them from the dead," telling them from the evidence of his own eyes whither the road they are travelling leads, and that their eternal future depends upon the life they live on earth, "they will repent."

Solemn and awful was the reply. The revealed word of God is all-sufficient for His people's needs. In spite of all the difficulties, mis-readings, misunderstandings; in spite of all the excuses about the knowledge of the future life not being enough to convince them about it; if people will not

listen to the word that God sent by Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded even by the words of one who has passed through the gate of death, and speaks from his own experience.

It was in his ignorance that Peter had spoken upon the mount about making three tabernacles; one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. As regarded Jesus, that ignorance had already been enlightened; and now, by the picture of the hopeless state of those who have ceased to be influenced by the revealed word of God, the seventy were taught about Moses and the prophets, about the power of the Old Testament, its teachings, and its warnings. And as for their fitness to be light-bearers for Jesus, that would depend upon their faith in the things which He had taught them; their faith in the light which He had thrown upon the present life; upon their faith in its unseen issues; their faith in the revealed word of God, in its truth and unchangeableness.

b. 4.

A DOER OF THE LAW

*Introductory.* I. 4. Passing over judgment and the love of God.

*Beginning.* vi. 42. How canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me cast out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye.

*General.* G. 4:2:2. By the word of truth.—True. (The pupils who failed.)

*Special.* xvii. 1-4. Stumbling-blocks, and forgiveness.

The instructions in this section were meant to guide them in the actual doing of the work; and the saying introducing them was, "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" Everything connected with the work came from God. The knowledge and understanding required for it,



the powers of speech they were to use, the laws and ways they were to teach were all of God; entrusted to them by Him for the training of His people: and it was in things of God that they had to be faithful.

It was to them as His own pupils that Jesus was speaking: the men whom He, as the Teacher sent from God, was making fit to be sent to teach for Himself: and He was guarding them against heedlessness and carelessness; against attempting to teach others, and to set others right, without taking into account their own defects, such as the beam in the eye which made their own views so untrustworthy. For the work which they would have to do was awful in its responsibilities. What they would have to teach, and would have to pass from one to another, like the leaven, unchanged, was God's own law. In its fulness it had to be taught; with nothing explained away, nothing slurred over, nothing left out. They were to act as guides to the people; showing them where the ways of life would lead, where the true path of life was to be found: and they were but human beings, purblind, imperfect; each with his own share of the frailty of human nature. It would be impossible but that wrong teaching would be given: that instead of the way of life being made clear and plain, instead of the laws and ways of the kingdom of God, by which alone it could be followed, being given unchanged, just as God had given them, things would be added, things left out; even judgment and the love of God would be passed over; and stumbling-blocks would be put in the way of the people of God. It would be only natural for men of imperfect vision to err thus: but the Master made no allowance for yieldings to human nature. It was "Woe unto that man" through whom the stumbling-block would come, the man who gave the wrong teaching. For those whom they were to teach would be like children put under their care; many of them like little children unable to judge for themselves, and having to trust entirely to

the guidance of a Spokesman of Christ; and it would be well for him that a mill-stone were hung about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of them to stumble by his wrong teaching.

Such was the first part of the instructions given to Spokesmen of Christ to aid them in teaching the laws and ways of His kingdom. Mouthpieces of the Son of God, the laws which they were to proclaim were to be the laws which He had proclaimed, no more and no less, the law unchangeable: the interpretations and the applications thereof, the interpretations and applications which He had given, or which He would give if He were standing there with them. As mouthpieces of the Son of God they would be heard and obeyed by the children of God. But solemn and great as the influence was which such a knowledge ought to have upon them, it was not the grandeur of the fact that they were Spokesmen of Christ that they were taught to keep before themselves; but rather their infirmities, their faultiness and the terrible personal danger into which carelessness would bring them. "Take heed to yourselves" was the warning short and sharp; take heed to yourselves lest by any means you give wrong teaching, and beginners in Christ are misled.

Even when a man takes such heed to himself that he never makes a mistake in his teaching, never teaches anything wrong, never changes in the least the law of the kingdom of God, he may still be useless as a Teacher for Christ. The teaching may be given clearly and correctly, and yet be powerless to win the hearers, powerless to work any change, powerless to guide heavenward. The power to teach may be lost as completely as the power to rescue from evil influences was lost by those pupils of Christ at the foot of the mount of the Transfiguration. They had lost their power by being "perverse," twisted, turned aside from doing what He told them: and this power to teach can be lost by not carrying out the instructions which were now given to the

seventy to perfect them in their work of teaching—instructions in the law of love. These instructions had to do with their brethren, their fellow-Teachers, and not their hearers: for if they could bear with their fellows as Jesus now taught them to do, they would be able also to bear with their hearers from whom they would not expect so much, and for whom they would make greater allowances.

“If thy brother sin, rebuke him.” Sin—missing the mark, going astray—is here sin against God. It is spoken of in general terms; but, seeing that what is being dealt with in this section is the wrong teaching of God’s laws, we may safely say that the sin referred to is that with which the orthodox are so unforbearing, the teaching of false doctrine. The law of love does not countenance in the slightest that tenderness for others’ feelings which would pass over wrong teaching in silence. The sinner has to be rebuked; the sin condemned: but the heretic, when penitent, is to be forgiven, and received again as a brother unfallen. And so with the people. Their changings of God’s laws, their misguided interpretation of them would have to be attacked, and the offenders rebuked: but always with the aim of winning them to repentance; always with the speaker’s heart full of the love whose triumph is swallowed up in forgiveness.

To teach with power the Teacher must never take offence. Whatever is done to him, whatever is said, whatever the opposition may be, or the wilful obstinacy, he forgives it all, readily, willingly, unceasingly. “If he sin against thee seven times in a day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.” To be able to do that for his brethren, the man must indeed have the heart of Jesus; and when the heart of Jesus is there, the heart of love divine, the words of Jesus will come, and come with power; and the servant of Christ will teach, as the Master, Who has sent him, wants him to teach.

To be a good and powerful teacher of the law of God

the man has therefore not only to know and understand it, but to do it as well. Love, the fulfilling of the law, has to rule his life; love such as will enable him to bear with others as his Master bore so long with His perverse pupils.

b. 5.

A HUMBLE SERVANT OF CHRIST JESUS

*Introductory.* I. 5. Takers away of the key of knowledge.

*Beginning.* vi. 42. Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

*General.* G. 5:2:2. Meek—Welcoming aid. (Forbidding one who cast out devils.)

*Special.* xvii. 5-10. Faith; and the unprofitable slave.

The last section of the chapter has to do as usual with the way in which Spokesmen of Christ are to bear themselves towards their people. In telling Theophilus about this, and showing him how Jesus taught the seventy to behave themselves as His Teachers should, the evangelist has made use once more of the name apostles. In each of the first three parts of the treatise he mentions them once; just enough to trace their career through the lower orders up to the highest: this section apparently being chosen in order to show Theophilus that it was the attitude which they too were to take towards those to whom they would have to speak in the name of God when filling the highest office in His kingdom.

The last of the maxims which furnished subject-matter for the several sections began with, "No household servant can serve two masters." Into the household of God on earth mammon finds an entrance; and those who are won by it, like the money-loving Pharisees, are no longer servants of God. The choice between the service of God and that of mammon has to be made and kept; the apostles spoke as men who had made their choice, and were praying for help to keep it. It was to Jesus as the Lord that they

made their request; to Him as the Head of the household to which they belonged, the only Master Whom they would serve: and they spoke, not as strong men, grand and great, men who tower above their hearers and claim to have their words hearkened to as the voice of God, but as weaklings, struggling against infirmities; as men who had a beam in their eye and were unable to cast it out. One common darkener of the light had just been set before them—unforgiveness; and they well knew how hard it was for them to forgive and forget unceasingly; how soon they would tire, and cease to try, although the presence of any unforgiveness meant so surely the loss of the key of knowledge of the will of God. So they prayed the Lord of the household, whose bond is love, to add to their faith. And the answer which He, speaking as the Lord, gave for the guidance of the servants of His household, was that if they had even the smallest particle of the faith for which they had asked an increase, they would be able to say, not merely to a darkening beam, but to a great shade-giving sycamine tree, "Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea," and it would obey them, and be removed so completely that its shadow would fall upon none, would darken no one's view.

So far the instruction had had to do with that unceasing watchfulness against making mistakes which keeps a man so humble, and makes him so patient towards others; now it had to do with the position which, as humble-minded men, they were to claim, and to take, as the Spokesmen of God.

In the early part of their training they had been taught to be so self-effacing that they would look solely to the advancement of the Master's work, and be ready to welcome the aid even of those who did not follow with them. Now they were taught to take a position of deeper lowliness still. They were made to regard themselves and their importance from an onlooker's point of view; and the vision they were shown of themselves was that of slaves.

The two kinds of service for which they had so far been trained—the pioneer work of breaking the ground for the growing of the seed, and the work of caring for the people of God—were represented by a ploughman and a shepherd. It would make no difference which of the two was used for the illustration, for the behaviour of all as servants of Christ had to be the same.

Each apostle was made to decide for himself about the regard which he should claim as a messenger of Christ. He was made to take the place of a man who had a slave of his own, a ploughman or a shepherd, who had been sent by him into the field to work for him; and to picture to himself the regard which he would consider to be due to that slave. The apostles knew well enough that his having done the work he had been sent to do would give the man no claim at all upon them; not even for a prompt supply of the food and rest which his work made him need. He was but a slave; and would be treated as a slave by any of them who owned him, and would always be made to keep his place. And, knowing that he was a slave, the man himself would recognize that such treatment was all that he could, or should, expect.

And that was the way in which all servants of Christ were to regard themselves, and to present themselves before their people—as slaves: slaves, indeed, of Christ; but as men who, no matter what the work was that had been given them to do, laid claim to no dignity, to no regard from men; exalting themselves over none, for they were but slaves. Even that which is the pride and satisfaction of a worker, and brings the praise of men—the doing of perfect service—was to be for them but an occasion for the exercise of the great meekness their office required, and for the sincere and heart-felt confession, “We are unprofitable slaves; we have done that which it was our duty to do.”

## C.

## JUSTIFYING

## 11-19. The ten lepers.

The illustration, with which the chapter closes, was taken from what happened at the cleansing of the ten lepers. One or two short statements put Theophilus in touch with the scene. It took place, he was told, as Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem: when the shadow of the coming end had fallen upon the Prophet of Nazareth, and so many had begun to turn from Him and disregard Him, that one of those left had asked Him, "Lord, are they few that be saved?"—for it was as the suffering Servant, One despised and rejected of men, that He was to be viewed in it.

Also it was as He was passing between Samaria and Galilee, where a mixed community dwelt. However tolerant of one another's customs border-line intermingling may have made them, this much is certain: that for Samaritans and Jews to have lived peaceably together in the same village, the Samaritans would have had to conform to the Jewish laws of health, and not only banish all suspected cases of leprosy, but only re-admit them when pronounced free from disease by Jewish health officers.

Then, as if to give Theophilus the key to what it was to be about, he was told that it was "as He was entering into a certain village" that the occurrence began. Once before the evangelist had used the same kind of expression about Jesus' entering into a certain village. It was at the close of the Spokesmen's training to be Welcomers, when He was about to give them a lesson upon the reception of the penitent; and his use of it here showed Theophilus that it was from that same part of the Welcomers' training that the illustration now being given was drawn.

Those who met Jesus were ten in number; lepers; outcasts; a prey to that loathsome disease which is a type of the sins which cut people off from the fellowship of the people

of God. They represented the publicans and sinners whom the Spokesmen were to welcome in Jesus' name, when penitent. They did not do as the other leper had done, and come near for Him to touch them Himself and save them from their doom; but stood afar off, as people would have to stand when He had gone: and they spoke as if they belonged to Him; were His people, whose duty it was to obey Him; like those baptized who would be under the Spokesmen's care. "Jesus, Master," they cried, "have mercy on us."

The seventy heard them cry for mercy, like the penitent cry to the Saviour and do not cry in vain: but it was not from that stage of the penitent's career that the lesson was drawn which taught them about the fewness of the saved. It was from the next stage; that in which the pardoned penitent get their claim recognized to be received once more as fit members of the congregation of God's people—the stage which began when Jesus commanded them to go and show themselves to the priests, as if the fact of their having cried to Him for mercy had brought them cleansing.

The priests were the men whom God had appointed to give to any one, whose leprosy had departed from him, the assurance, which all were to recognize, that he was really clean; permitted to mingle once more with the rest of the people, and appear in His presence with them. When Jesus was afar off, it would be to His Spokesmen that sinners, such as those lepers represented, would have to come; so that it was the people's share in that last part of their work as Welcomers that the seventy were seeing portrayed. It was from the different ways in which it was done that the illustrations were drawn which made clear to Theophilus the kind of instruction Jesus had given about the justifying, touched upon in the first section of the chapter, which furnished one of the tests of fitness for being Teachers for Christ.

Leprous people would only have shown themselves to a



priest, and sought to get his verdict that they were clean. when they really believed themselves to have become clean. In this case, no signs of cleansing had shown themselves; and it must have been because Jesus had commanded them to go, that they had set out. Their faith in the pity and power of Jesus—that faith which the penitent sinner must have that his cry for mercy has not been in vain—could not have been very strong: for so far were they from being sure of their healing, that instead of setting out briskly and hopefully, “they withdrew,” going slowly away.

“And it came to pass, as they went, they were cleansed.” It was from what took place after this cleansing that the evangelist’s illustrations came.

The command of Jesus had made the verdict of the priest a part of the answer to their prayer for mercy; but nine of them made it the all-important part. Upon that verdict depended their restoration to their old place in the world; and could they but satisfy the priests and get their declaration that they were clean, their end was gained. So they went straight on, seeking to justify themselves before men; thereby furnishing an example of that regard for the opinion of men for which the Pharisees had been condemned in the first section of the chapter: a regard which none could have and be a Teacher such as Jesus wanted.

What the true mark of fitness was for being a Teacher for Christ was shown by means of the one who turned back. He had looked deeper than the others into what had been done for them; and had seen, not merely that he was cleansed, and had those outward signs of cleanness which could be seen and vouched for by the priests, but that he was also healed, and that the very root of his disease had been taken away. Like the rest he found himself between Jesus and the priests; and he too had to make his choice as to whom he should give the pre-eminence. With a loud voice glorifying God, he turned back to Him Whom men were despising and forsaking; and falling down at His feet, the

feet of Him to Whom all hearts are open, he gave Him thanks. He showed himself to Jesus.

To make the scene perfectly clear to Theophilus, he was told that the man was a Samaritan. This meant that, not being a Jew, he had nothing to do with the offerings which followed the showing to the priests: and that the justifying now being illustrated had therefore no connection whatever with that witnessing before God and man which was made in those sacrifices.

It was the right way of justifying that the seventy were seeing illustrated by the man showing himself thus to Jesus. How widespread the wrong way of getting justified would be, they were taught by the fact that of the ten that were cleansed nine were seeking to justify themselves before men. Only one was found who returned to give glory to God by hailing Jesus as his Saviour, thanking Him for what He had done, and getting His verdict upon the change that had been made in him; and that man, Jesus told them, was "a stranger."

The word that He used meant one of another race, or breed; and its use in this symbolic lesson taught them two things. One, that belonging to the kingdom of God, and knowing what He had done to them through Jesus, would not keep people from forgetting Him, and acting as if going to the Spokesmen brought the cleansing: resting content with justifying themselves before men alone, without justifying themselves before God. The other, that those who act like the man at Jesus' feet, and turn their backs upon the world and the joys re-opened to them, and make being justified before God their great aim, are of a different type altogether—the type that His Teachers are to be and are to urge His people to be.

"Arise, and go thy way." That way led to the priests: for the command to show himself still held; and, like the nine, he would have to present himself to them and be pronounced clean. But unlike them, he had the joy of salvation

in his heart. His faith had saved him; and showing himself to the priests was no longer justifying himself before men, for he had justified himself before God by coming to Him through Jesus as being one cleansed by Him—the only one out of ten of whom it was declared that he was saved.

## CHAPTER O.

ST. LUKE XVII. 20.—XVIII. 30.

(a). xvii. 20, 21. (b). xvii 22.—xviii. 17. (c). xviii. 18-30.

(a).

xvii. 20, 21. And being asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you.

(b). 1.

22-25. And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

And they shall say to you, Lo, there! Lo, here! go not away, nor follow after them: for as the lightning, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things and be rejected of this generation.

2.

26-37. And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

After the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away:

and let him that is in the field likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife.

Whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it: but whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I say unto you, In that night there shall be two men on one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. There shall be two women grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. And they answering say unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Where the body is, thither will the eagles also be gathered together.

## 3.

xviii. 1-8. And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, and regarded not man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came oft unto him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest she wear me out by her continual coming.

And the Lord said, Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge his elect, which cry to him day and night, and he is long suffering over them? I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily. Howbeit when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

## 4.

9-14. And he spake also this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get. But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner.

I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

## 5.

15-17. And they brought unto him also their babes, that he should touch them: but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, saying, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.

## (c).

18-30. And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, even God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and mother. And he said, All these things have I observed from my youth up. And when Jesus heard it, he said unto him, One thing thou lackest yet: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. But when he heard these things, he became exceeding sorrowful; for he was very rich. And Jesus seeing him said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, Then who can be saved? But he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

And Peter said, Lo, we have left our own, and followed thee. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or wife, or brethren, or parents, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this time, and in the world to come eternal life.

## CHAPTER O. XVII. 20.—XVIII. 30.

### INSTRUCTIONS TO HEALERS

a. xvii. 20, 21. b. xvii. 22.—xviii. 17. c. xviii. 18-30.

a.

xvii. 20, 21. *Introduction.* This part of the Saviour's mission is to set at liberty the bruised, the feeble of soul who have broken down and are lying crushed in their weakness; and to deliver them so thoroughly that henceforth they will be able to serve God without fear.

The kind of help they need is pointed out by the name which is given to their failings. They are called infirmities, or weaknesses, because the power to keep from them has been lost. Every one, even the strongest, has unceasingly to come to the Source of strength and get help; and those overcome by infirmities are unable to do so. The faith by which they try to come is weak; the will is weak; weak too are the hands stretched out for aid; and weak is the heart in its desire to receive and use it. And such people as these, ever stumbling, often falling, have to be prepared for the Lord; made ready for Him; fit and eager to welcome the Bridegroom.

Those whose duty it is to prepare them are the Spokesmen of Christ. To them wounded souls and natures weakly and deformed are handed over by the great Physician to be cared for tenderly, faithfully, and wisely, and returned to Him sound and strong; guided into the way of peace, and helped and strengthened to walk therein: a work of mercy

which has to be done by following the instructions outlined for Theophilus in this chapter.

Like the two previous chapters it is introduced by means of the Pharisees—the types of unworthy shepherds—but without anything being said about the cause of their unfitness. This would mean that they are to be regarded as having the same faulty nature as that which had made them object-lessons upon unfitness for being Teachers for Christ: and that they were still lovers of money, deriding the instructions given by Jesus, and satisfied with outward signs of goodness such as would win the approval of men. For helping and uplifting people, men like that would trust to the power of wealth and not the power of God; the means which they would advocate would be such as men of wealth and power could give; and the change sought would be something which could be seen and approved of by men—outward fitness.

Those Pharisees would have known well enough that their views were not the views which Jesus held, and taught His pupils to hold; and it would have been in a scoffing spirit that they asked Him when that Kingdom of God, about which He spoke, would come.

It was a question which the seventy themselves, as Spokesmen of Jesus, would also have liked Him to answer; for to them, and their class, the promise had been made that some would not taste of death until they had seen the kingdom of God. What they heard was, that it does not come with observation; it cannot be detected by close watching: nor is there any place where it can be seen: for it is within people.

By telling Theophilus this the evangelist was pointing out to him the way in which the expression “the kingdom of God” was being used in the chapter. It was not the imperial view of it that was being taken, that of a kingdom which could be seen spreading world-wide as its soldiers fought and died; but that which Jesus had taken when He



likened it to leaven working in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened—the rule of God in a heart conquered by a power within. Silent and unseen, the leaven gently makes its way through the meal; silent and unseen, the power of God works gently in a human being, conquering and transforming him.

As might be expected, they were themselves to be what they were to make others to be. Having, as servants of the Bridegroom to make others ready for His coming, they also were to be ready themselves for that coming, prepared for the Lord in every point even as the others were to be. They were to train and help others so well that the kingdom of God would have full and free course in their hearts; which meant that it had to fill and rule their own hearts also: so that what Jesus taught about this coming of the kingdom of God applied as fully to themselves as to their people.

*Summary.* The first two sections deal with the kind of men Spokesmen of Jesus have to be in order to be able to act as Healers of the people. They help to show why only some of those whom Jesus was training would “see the kingdom of God.”

In the first place they would have to be men who do not look for visible aid from the Son of man; who disregard the offers and suggestions of others, and go stedfastly on their way through faith in Christ unseen.

Their second mark of fitness for being used as Healers of people's infirmities would be that the kingdom of God was within them: and what that meant he learned from the second section, where they were taught what would have to take place in themselves for them to be wholly Christ's, subjected entirely to the will of God.

The last three sections are made up of the usual series of instructions about representing Jesus, doing His work, and behaving towards His people. These instructions were given them as to men who were doing what He had taught them, and, having been freed from faults such as those of

the Pharisees, were fit to be used for His work. First of all, by the parable of the unjust judge, they were taught that to act for Him in this part of His mission they had to be men of untiring prayer. By prayer they would get the healing and strength which the weakness, whatever it was, required: but to get it, they were next taught that they had to draw near to God like the publican did—as men who were themselves imperfect; who were themselves sinners, but penitent. And lastly, their attitude towards the people whom they were helping was to be that of guardians of little children.

The closing illustration, that of the rich ruler, dealt with what they needed, as guardians of the weak, so that they themselves would inherit the everlasting life in the world to come for which they were preparing their people.

#### b. 1.

#### WALKING BY FAITH

*Introductory.* J. c. 1. The Lord coming and finding His servant feeding His household.

*Beginning.* vi. 43, 44. For there is no good tree that bringeth forth corrupt fruit; nor again a corrupt tree that bringeth forth good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

*General.* L. 1:3. Stedfast. (The last first, and the first last.)

*Special.* xvii. 22-25. Desiring to see a day of the Son of man.

This first section deals as usual with the kind of man our Lord requires for His work. It is led up to by the parable of the faithful and wise steward who gave the members of his lord's household their food in due season: for those whom Jesus wants for this work are men who will be found doing the will of their absent Master at all times like that steward. Not that the seventy were ever led to sup-

pose that while He was away they were to do His work by themselves alone, and by their own strength. The scene on the plain had taught them that it is from Him, and from Him alone, that the healing power comes, and that the place of His servants is by His side; so that they knew that this work of tending the household of God, healing infirmities, uplifting, ennobling, making Christ-like and fit for the Bridegroom's coming, has always to be done with Him, although He is unseen. That is why He calls for men whose companionship with Himself does not depend upon their being able to see Him with the bodily eye, or hear Him with the bodily ear: men who can walk by faith, and not by sight; and by that life of faith in Him, like good trees in the garden of the Lord, bring forth good fruit for those in need of refreshment and strength.

No matter how good and plentiful the fruit might be which they brought forth, times would come when their efforts would seem hopeless; when the leaven in their people's hearts would seem to be working very slowly, or not at all; and they would long, He told them, to see one of the days of the Son of man; long to be able to walk by sight, and bring people to Him as they were doing then, and see once more the evil spirits cast out with a word, and sinners rescued and won. For He knew how hard it would be to convince people of the reality of the unseen world, of the presence of their unseen Saviour; and He knew that they would long to be able to show Him to them, and say, "This is He," and make the doubter hear His voice, the sick of soul feel His touch, and go away sound and strong. He knew too that they themselves would be cast down at times by the knowledge of their own helplessness; so empty-handed, so unable to supply the needs of their people: and that they would long for such times as the feeding of the five thousand—when, from His own hand, they received the strengthening food that sufficed for the needs of a whole multitude—so that once more they might see all partake and be satisfied.

But the kingdom of God cometh not with observation; and even such longings as those were to be cast aside. They were useless, the Master told them; for such things would not be seen by them; and those who serve Him must not look for them.

Then there would be the people who know so well what servants of Christ should do; who can tell them so readily how to get deliverance for the weak, the down-trodden, the enslaved: the people of whom He said that "they will say to you, Lo there! Lo, here!" How such advisers were to be treated by them was made very plain by the brief command, "Go not away, nor follow after them." They were to give no heed whatever to such people. Adopting their ideas, following their advice would be marks of unfitness for doing this work for Christ.

Saying "Lo, there!" to men like the seventy who were seeking this kingdom of God was as much as to say that it was away from the surroundings in which they then were that they would find it. It was away in the wilderness, for instance, that John the Baptist, so frequently used as a type of their ministry, had been made fit for the service of God. His was a special preparation for special work: but to some it would seem that it was to enable him to live as one with the Nazarite vow upon him should, and thus keep fit for doing God's will, that he had been kept far away from the temptations of drink and other indulgences; and with them "Lo, there!" would mean that it is in such-like circumstances that the kingdom of God comes to people, and by separating them thus from temptations to falling they are being delivered from their weaknesses, and enabled to do God's will.

The second kind of advisers, those of whom it was foretold that they will say "Lo, here!", would have been represented then by the Pharisees, worldly-minded, man-regarding, whose standard was so low, whose ways of uplifting were so unspiritual; the men who were so sure that by fol-

lowing their ways, their counsels, people would be delivered, uplifted, and made what mankind is meant to be. In other words, that if Spokesmen of Christ will only use the cure-alls which such self-appointed deliverers offer, and follow their teachings, and adopt their schemes, the weak and frail will no longer fall, and all will be well with the people. But all such advisers our Lord treated as trees whose fruit is bad; and warned His Spokesmen that, if they would become fit to serve Him in this work of healing, they must have nothing to do with such aids. They were to look, not to men, but to the Son of man; and they might as well say of a flash of lightning, "Lo, there it is to be found!" or of its universal light, "Lo, here it abides!" as to try to locate Him. In the day of the Son of man, when He comes to help the weaknesses of His people, He is to be found everywhere; and no man can fix, or limit, His working. In all places, and at all times, His servants can come to Him although He is unseen; everywhere there is His light in which they can walk and work.

There was something else, however, which Theophilus had to know about this part of their instruction; something which helps to explain the fewness of the saved. Still speaking of Himself as the Bringer-in of the kingdom of God about whose coming the Pharisees had asked Him, Jesus told the seventy that "first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation." The things which the Son of man would suffer come from the faults and failings of those who are trying thus to set at liberty them that are bruised, and of His servants who, by going away and following after them, have become last in His service instead of first. They are the sufferings of the Master Whose ways are departed from, Whose rules are unkept; the sufferings of One tried and rejected by His own people. For this class of workers, the lo, here's, and the lo, there's, and those who follow them, have no use for the ways of the Son of man, for the gentle, unseen working of the heaven. He is too

slow for them; and after they have given Him a brief trial, they reject Him; believing that they themselves have some better way for setting the world right, some surer, quicker help for the weaknesses of mankind. Such are unfit servants, those whom the Son of man does not use for this part of His work.

Seeing that the things He would suffer were many, those who thus failed, and became unfit for being used for this work would also be many; and the bruised would be but slowly delivered from their infirmities.

b. 2.

READY FOR THE MASTER

*Introductory.* J. c. 2. The servant who said in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming."

*Beginning.* vi. 45. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

*General.* L. 2:3. Trusting in the name of the Lord.

*Special.* xvii. 26-37. In the days of the Son of man.

What Theophilus was now told helps us to understand further why so many lives are wrecked through weaknesses; the victims looking in vain for some servant of Christ who is able and willing to help them. The key to it is found in the parable of the servant who began by saying in his heart "My lord delayeth his coming," and ended by being cast aside as useless. Ceasing to expect his lord, he went wrong altogether. First of all he grew impatient; then self-indulgent; eating and drinking, and sinking lower and lower, till at last he fell into the gross and selfish sin of drunkenness, a mass of infirmities. In a day when he expected him not that servant's lord would come, and in an hour when he knew not; and would cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the unfaithful.

It was to guard them against this fate that the instruction outlined in this section was given to the seventy; for to them too would come the temptation to say in their hearts "My Lord delayeth His coming." Their work would be to make sure of the perfect leavening of the three measures of meal by helping their people to let the kingdom of God have full, free, and perfect sway in their hearts. That meant that they would have to help the weak to get strength to overcome their failings and be wholly God's, obeying His will from the heart; and to do this they themselves had to be "righteous," whole-hearted keepers of God's law, with His kingdom ruling in their hearts: good men, who, out of the good treasure of their hearts, brought forth that which was good. As with the other parts of their work this service had its special requirements. Those dealt with in this section are connected with the threefold rule, which, in addition to the laws of God laid down for all His people, Christ's Spokesmen have to follow to the end; the rule upon which their faithful service depends.

It was by means of a series of painful scenes that the seventy were given this part of their instruction upon becoming fit to be used for the healing of others. First of all in a picture of "the days of Noah"—drawn from the inspired lesson by which people were taught what the result would be of believing that no penalties for wrong doing would be inflicted—they were shown what would take place in the days of the Son of man. The people were eating and drinking; yielding to their appetites; giving their minds to things of the flesh, and not of the Spirit; living for themselves, and not for others. Their self-indulgences were the same as those to which the servant had given way who said in his heart "My lord delayeth his coming"; the same as those which would beset Spokesmen of Christ when they ceased to expect their Master. Moreover those people in the days of Noah were marrying, and being given in marriage. A man lived on in his offspring; and his life was

regarded as being preserved as long as his family existed: so that the picture represented to those Spokesmen of Christ men who were doing that which was forbidden in the first of those sayings given in connection with denying self, and were seeking to save their lives. Their whole aim was for themselves, and to preserve their own lives.

The end was not pictured as coming to those people at once. The years went by with Noah always amongst them warning, pleading, offering them life with himself; and time for repentance remained until the day when he left them and entered into the ark. Then the judgment of God came upon them, and destroyed them all. And so it would be with those servants of the Son of man who did not deny themselves. They too would go on happily, and all would seem to be well with them, until the day came when they would be forsaken by Him, shut out from the ark of His Church, and destroyed. Not that their earthly life would be taken from them. The life that they would lose would be their life as servants of Christ: for they would cease to exist as His servants, having been cast off by Him altogether.

There were two parts, however, in what they had been told when they were first being trained to deny themselves. The second part was "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self"; and so the second part of this lesson upon the effects of not denying self from the heart is about seeking the things of earth.

The two parts of the lesson being thus closely connected, the starting point was made the same as before—eating and drinking; but this time the scene was laid amongst those who had forgotten God. The outcome now was that they became given to business, to buying and selling, to getting gain; and, planting trees and building houses for themselves, they sought to settle down and make their home in the place. This buying and selling, planting and building also went on unchecked until all at once the end came. People like that bring forth nothing good for the people of God.



Worldly, and living for themselves, they have no place in the plan of His kingdom. The very day when Lot forsook the place where those people lived and traded, and left them to themselves and their ways, the judgment of God came down from heaven and destroyed them all. So it would be with servants of Christ who broke His rule about denying self, and were worldly-minded, worldly-hearted. From heaven, where their names had been written, judgment would come; the judgment of God upon their worldly lives. Their Master would leave them: and His leaving would mean, as before, the cutting of them off from His service, utterly and for ever, as useless for spiritual healing.

All the rest of the section has to do with their fitness to serve Jesus as the Deliverer Who comes in the name of the Lord. In the day when the Son of man would be revealed, when He, Who is always with His servants, would make His presence known, and those who bore the badge of the cross would have to stand forth openly, and boldly declare themselves to be His men, the same thing would take place; the same hopeless casting off of the unworthy.

The lesson again bore upon their former training. When they were first being taught about cross-bearing, it was against letting shamefacedness keep them from publicly acknowledging themselves to be Jesus' men that they had been warned; now it was against letting anything earthly, even cherished household treasures, turn them aside from taking at once the stand which they ought to take. The kingdom of God had to possess the whole heart of the servant of God. Like as the cross-bearer, when the time came for him to take his stand with his master, did it, not merely outwardly in the body, but so completely in heart and mind that nothing could make him ashamed of him; so were servants of Christ to do when He revealed Himself.

As pointed out by the goods being left in the house, the lesson was being given as to men who had taken the first step and had forsaken all; men who were waiting for the

Master to make it known to them that the time had come for His servants to take their stand for Him in the sight of all. It was to those who were given to prayer and meditation that the knowledge is pictured as coming. To the man upon the house-top, the quiet place of prayer, it came. His goods were close at hand, just beneath him in the house; but when he came down from the house-top there was to be no turning aside to enter the house where they were. Nothing was to keep him from looking stedfastly to Jesus; nothing to keep him from going and taking His stand with Him. To the man in the field, the place of meditation, away from the abode of men, came the revelation also. Not only was he not to return to the house, but he was not even to turn back and look towards the home where his earthly treasures were; not even in thought or longing to swerve from his devotion to the Son of man.

And there was again the same awful judgment hanging over them. "Remember Lot's wife." Disobeying the command which had been given her, she lingered behind, and turned to gaze with longing and regret at the home and its treasures and the life she had left. That was her ruin: for, then and there, she perished; cut off for ever from helping her children, from leading them to safety. Cross-bearers of Christ, who turn back in their hearts to the good things they are leaving behind, or to the pleasures of sin from which they have been rescued, they too are unfit to serve the Deliverer of God's people. The breaking of any law of God, even slackness in observing it, unfits Spokesmen of Christ for helping others in their weakness, for bringing healing for their infirmities. Those who cannot resist looking back, like Lot's wife, at the evil from which they have been delivered, and, in imagination, wallow once more in it, are plainly showing themselves to be unfit to share in this work of healing, and are justly cast aside by their Master as worthless. Their life as His servants ends; and they are left behind by Him as useless for this work.

The last part of the instruction given to the seventy to make them fit to become Healers of mankind is introduced by the saying, "Whosoever shall seek to keep his life for himself shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose it shall preserve it alive." It was with "following Jesus"—the last part of the rule of service, where the cross-bearer follows his leader to death—that what they were being taught had to do: the part about which they had been told that some of them standing there with Him would not taste of death until they had seen the kingdom of God. Their earlier instruction had been based upon what Jesus said about His wanting to go to Jerusalem to take care of her helpless people; and being kept away, and the work not done, because those who killed the prophets and drove God's messengers away would not receive Him: and it was to guard them against what would destroy them as Spokesmen of Christ, or keep them from acting as His messengers, that the following instruction was given them.

It was still as the Son of man coming to see and sift His servants that He was speaking; but it was now as coming in the night, the night which belongs to the day in which He is revealed: for the signs of fitness required would be such as could not be seen by men. The test would be whether the man was seeking to save his life for himself or was losing it; and the illustrations given showed the choice being made by means of that test under conditions which had to do with getting two necessities of life, sleep and food.

They were told of two men, both in precisely the same circumstances, and doing the same thing—in the same bed, resting: and yet only one of them taken by the Son of man. In man's judgment there was no difference between them; but not in the Son of man's: for He judges by the state of the heart, the motives, which He alone can see. The one left represents one who is seeking to keep his life for himself; using his leisure time for himself, for his own

health and bodily good; and quenching the Spirit. The other represents one who, regardless of the rest he is losing, remembers God in his bed and thinks upon Him when he is waking; spending the night in prayer to God as Jesus did: one always ready for the Son of man, expecting his Lord's return.

Then they were told of two women who would be working at the same mill, working in just the same way, and apparently for exactly the same reason—to prepare the food by which life and strength are preserved. But one, regardless of self, would have had her heart set upon her household, upon others; whereas the other would have had only herself in view, her own life and health: and judged by such inner motives, unseen of man, when the choice was made, one would be taken and the other left.

And so it would be with servants of Christ. The eye of man may be able to see no difference in them; but the Son of man, Who reads the heart, can: and He knows who are fit, and who are unfit, to go forth after Him and deliver people in the name of the Lord. In those whom He chooses there is this great mark of fitness for that work—they have lost their lives for Him. Not that they have actually died: but their hearts, their aims, their doings, their lives, are all for Him and His service; and His kingdom has taken full possession of them. These are they who preserve their lives: they who will see the kingdom of God.

Like the former examples, those unfit to go forth in the name of the Lord are no longer counted amongst the servants of Christ. Every one of them will be left. "Where Lord?" His hearers asked Him. And the answer came, "Where the body is, thither will the eagles also be gathered together." It was evidently meant to recall something very familiar to them, a sight they would often have seen in the wild land around the Sea of Galilee—eagles sweeping down on all sides to the spot where some animal lay; coming, each from its place in the heavens, to get the food it had

been seeking on the earth below. They had risen to their great height seemingly set on soaring heavenward, but had been seeking all the time to preserve their lives, their hearts set on things of earth, living for themselves—types of the Spokesmen whom the Master was rejecting. For He was picturing those who, by seeking their own well-being, had fallen from the high estate to which they had risen: and, like vultures who answered the call from below, He left them gathered around the dead things of earth on which their hearts were set.

The way for Spokesmen of Christ to become fit, and remain fit, to be used by Him for this work of healing is to do the contrary to everything that leads to unfitness and rejection. They have not only to set out wanting to serve, wanting to help, with their hearts set on that high calling of God, but they have also to make that service a life-long service, the threefold rule a life-long test. In order to be able to answer that test at any time, and be ready and fit for the work of helping and healing, they have always to be expecting the Master; always ready for Him to come and examine His servants, sure that He will find the kingdom of God within their hearts, His laws written upon them.

### b. 3.

#### UNTIRING IN PRAYER

*Introductory.* J. 3. Seeking the kingdom of God.

*Beginning.* vi. 46. And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

*General.* G. 3:3:2. Obeying God's Chosen One. (The voice from the cloud.)

*Special.* xviii. 1-8. The parable of the tireless widow.

The instruction given to the seventy in the third sections of these chapters was to enable them to act for Jesus as His representatives. They had already been told in the course of their training that to act for Him in His work of setting the bruised at liberty by healing their infirmities

they had to be seekers of the kingdom of God; and now they learned what kind of seekers they would have to be to find that kingdom as described in the introduction to this chapter.

Their lesson had begun with the words, "Why do ye call on Me, O Lord, O Lord, and do not the things which I say?" What was emphasized then was their doing what Jesus told them to do; now it was their calling upon Him for aid: and they were taught about the effectual, fervent prayer through Him which they would have to offer if they were to act for Him in doing this work.

The parable in which the instruction was given them was spoken to them as being God's elect;—men who had passed the test of the last section, and had been chosen by Jesus for His work of healing. Although God's chosen ones, they had no power of themselves either to help themselves or others; and for work such as that which they would have to do, there was no hope of any earthly aid. Like that helpless widow, their only resource was prayer.

Nothing is said about those whom they would have to deliver from evil, or about the widow's household. Like as she would make her children's afflictions her own, so the afflictions of those under their care were to be made their own by the Spokesmen of Christ; and the widow who represented them is therefore described as pleading for herself.

Some one was oppressing her; and owing to her weakness she could not get free from him. No one but the judge could deliver her; so to him, in her trouble, she cried. But a lonely widow had no influence: and to a man like that her case did not appeal; for he was one who had nothing to do with righteousness, nothing to do with pity or love. He feared not God, nor regarded man. Yet for all that, her unceasing coming and crying for deliverance prevailed.

Such was the parable. Then Jesus spoke as the Lord, the Head of the household of God, His Chosen One Whom they were to hear; and He spoke to them as to the chosen ones

of God, those whom God Himself had chosen for this special work of setting the bruised at liberty. Though they would be acting for Himself, they were not to expect that at a word the transformation would take place; that once asking would bring the desired change: for He spoke of them as crying day and night, like the widow pleading to be avenged of her adversary. This meant that they were to be untiring in prayer; sure that God, the righteous, loving Judge would hear, and set the bruised one free. Never were they to faint, or grow weary, in praying for themselves and their people to be delivered from the evil one. There was no fear of their ever wearying God; for He is very long-suffering with His chosen ones; and, unlike the unjust judge who sought to get rid of the widow, wants His servants in their need always to come to Him for aid.

The kind of prayer which those who act as representatives of the Deliverer of God's people are to offer, the prayer which is able to save the victim even when he is so far gone that he sinks down, worn out and crushed, weary of struggling against his weakness in vain, is the prayer of faith: the faith that is sure that God, in answer to His servants' prayer, will raise him up; giving him deliverance, and the strength required.

"When the Son of man cometh, will He find the faith on the earth?" Rare is the faith that earnest, ceaseless prayer will save; and rare it is to find even God's chosen servants so rich in it that they can act for Him Who cometh in the name of the Lord to set at liberty them that are bruised; and rare it is therefore to find those who are oppressed with infirmities set free.

## b. 4.

*Introductory.* J 4. Laying up treasure in heaven.

*Beginning.* vi. 47, 48. Every one that cometh unto Me, and heareth My words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock: and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it: because it had been well builded.

*General.* G. 4:3:2. Reverent. (The majesty of God.)

*Special.* xviii. 9-14 The parable of the Pharisee and the publican.

The greatest treasure that can be laid up in heaven is a human soul: a treasure which Spokesmen of Christ are laying up there when they are making their people fit for the coming of the Son of man; when they are helping the leaven to work till the whole is leavened; helping each heart to yield itself fully and freely to the will of God. All have weaknesses and failings, things which hinder the incoming of the kingdom of God, and each case differs more or less from all the others; but the Spokesmen's rule for dealing with them is the same for all, namely, to come to Jesus, hear His word, and do it. About the rule itself Theophilus had already been told. What he was now learning about was the way of coming; how, as being men who were building upon the rock, they were to draw near to God in their prayer of faith, and get healing for their people.

It is natural for people, whether Spokesmen or not, when they see some one with a weakness, some wretched being who cannot keep from falling, and do not happen to have that particular failing themselves, to compare themselves with the weak one, and feel how strong and good they are: and some of the seventy evidently had this fault to such an extent that they had confidence in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought. To them was spoken the parable of the Pharisee and the pub-



lican: a lesson which served to guard them against spoiling themselves for their work by yielding to this kind of temptation.

In that parable the Spokesmen were shown two men coming into the presence of God, as they themselves would have to come to get healing for the infirmities of their people. One of them was a man who always kept aloof from breakers of the law, and looked down on them as upon a lower race of beings. He stood boldly in the presence of God, thanking Him for the great difference between himself and others: how free he was from all gross sins; how free from disloyalty to the kingdom of God such as that publican showed, from all taint of schism. The marks of righteousness, he boasted, were also his; the regular fastings, and the giving of tithes.

The other stood afar off from him, as if unfit to be near so good a man. Into God's presence he also had come; but it was in the deepest humility. With downcast eyes he stood; unfit even to look towards the heaven against which he had sinned, the place where he ought to have been laying up treasure; and smiting upon his breast, he said, "God be gracious to me a sinner."

They both went back to their houses from which they had come to the temple to pray; went back to their duties to the work God had given them to do: but the one who returned justified, fit and able to provide for the well-being of his household as a servant of God should do, was the man who knew and felt his own short-comings, and confessed himself to be a sinner.

What the seventy were being taught was a continuation of the lesson they had learned at the healing of the man's son, when he had brought the helpless lad to Jesus, and received him back again delivered from the evil which had enslaved him. The majesty of God which was then revealed in Jesus had astonished them all, and taught them with what reverence they were to approach Him. And now they

learned that whosoever of them came into God's presence exalting himself over the feeble and the fallen would be humbled by having his prayers unanswered; failing, in the sight of all, to set at liberty them that are bruised. Whereas he who came humbly, owning himself to be a sinner and a failure like those for whom he was pleading, would be exalted in the eyes of all as one mighty to help the weak, mighty to save; one whose prayer of faith God ever hears.

b. 5.

AS GUARDIANS OF LITTLE CHILDREN

*Introductory.* J. 5. Servants in their lord's household.

*Beginning.* vi. 49. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great.

*General.* G. 5:3:2. Patient. (Going to another village.)

*Special.* xviii. 15-17. Little children.

This last section of the chapter has to do as usual with their treatment of the people amongst whom they were to work.

In the part of their training connected with it, they had been taught that they were to be like servants watching for their lord, with everything in the household ready for his return. The things which, as Spokesmen of Christ, they would have to make ready, were the hearts of His people; and these were to be prepared so thoroughly that not a single spot was to be left where the leaven had failed to work; not a single part unsubdued by the kingdom of God. All hindrances to the spread of the leaven had to be overcome, all infirmities by which people were beset, all bad habits and failings of which they could not get rid.

People of all ages would be found in the household of Christ: young and old; children as well as grown up. Amongst whom was their work as Healers to lie? At what stage of life were they to begin laying the foundation of

the nature which Jesus wanted to find in those made ready for Him? At what age should they begin to dig for that foundation, begin to attack bad habits, to heal weaknesses, and to form the character desired? Those whom they had seen healed of infirmities (omitting extreme cases chosen for the sake of the lessons they furnished,) were grown up people, who knew their hopeless state, and had come of themselves to be healed; and it would have been but natural for them to suppose that it was only with such like cases that they would have to deal; that the children would, in time, grow out of their childish weaknesses; whilst ordinary men and women would have enough will power of their own, and would need no help from them. It was with such views as these that the lesson now given them dealt.

What gave rise to it was their treatment of the people who brought babes in arms to Jesus to be touched by Him, that they might receive health and strength as the woman had done who touched the hem of His garment. Although they had been taught that this healing and strength was to be got through Jesus by prayer, when they saw what those people were doing, they rebuked them for so needlessly and uselessly troubling their Lord: not dreaming that it had anything to do with their own work.

As we have seen, it was amongst those who had been baptized that the distinctive work of the Spokesmen lay; so that the age at which they could begin to prepare the Christ-like character required was limited by the age at which people could be brought to Jesus in Baptism. It was to satisfy Theophilus about what he had been taught about this age-limit that the evangelist, before telling him the command which was to guide them in their work as Healers, told him how Jesus had openly condemned their conduct by calling the little ones to Himself—in other words, calling the forbidden parents to come to Him with their babes. The word which he used when speaking of those little ones meant infants in arms, new-born babes; thus showing that

at the very earliest possible time of life children could be brought to Jesus. There was to be no age-limit for Baptism.

The command, which Jesus then gave those whom He was training to heal people's infirmities for Him, was, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." The word which He used for little children meant all young children, and not merely babes in arms such as the evangelist had specially mentioned.

It was as to men who could see the use of grown-up people coming to be healed of infirmities, to be freed from the bondage of bad habits, but not of little children, that He spoke. Theirs was the common mistake of waiting until weaknesses had come to a head before troubling about healing them; until bad habits were firmly formed before trying to break them; waiting until children were old enough to understand what was being done, before trying to train them. They were neglecting the early childhood stage; and by so doing were building the house without the foundation. The Saviour's way for making ready a people prepared for Him was "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." The building was to begin in childhood. By training the children to be strong, the object of their work as Healers was being attained. They were giving them health by training them to resist temptation.

The Spokesmen themselves were not told to bring those little children to Jesus. What they were told to do was to suffer them to come, and not to rebuke them. Like the bringing of the new-born babes, the duty of bringing the little children, of teaching them to come to Jesus, lay with the parents. Certainly the moulding would be done under the Spokesmen's guidance, and with their encouragement, help, and blessing; for the work of preparation was theirs: but it was to the parents that Jesus left this early training, the training which would have such far-reaching influence upon the work of making little children fit, when they grew

up, for the coming of the Lord. The Spokesmen's part would be to deal with the parents' failures, and the fruits of their neglect.

"Of such is the kingdom of God." The kingdom spoken of here is the state of the three measures of meal when the whole is leavened; and is a heart wholly God's, one in which His rule is supreme, in which His will alone is done: and "of such" points out the kind of heart which can be so leavened. Around the Saviour, they saw the little ones clustered, confiding, trusting; full of that childlike trust which, when felt for God, leads on to perfect faith. They were in the tender, easily moulded stage of life, when the leaven of the kingdom can have free course; at the age when good is what the parents permit, and evil, what they forbid. "Of such" is the kingdom of God: of those who have that childlike state of heart which trusts so fully to the Father's care; which yields so readily to the moulding of His hands; which is so sure that all that He commands is right and all that He forbids is wrong for them; which is so ready to trust and love.

It was the foundation, the early stages of the leavening, about which they had so far been instructed. The treatment of the grown-up people still remained to be dealt with; and about them the instruction given to the Spokesmen was, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein": or, in the imagery of the parable, Whosoever shall not receive the leaven as a little child, he shall in no wise become leavened.

At this stage of the work, receiving the kingdom did not mean yielding to the first implanting of the leaven, but letting it enter into fresh parts of the heart; letting it go on changing other parts of the old nature, acting upon other habits, weaknesses, inclinations, ways, which are not what they ought to be; letting it spread until the person becomes a true and loyal subject of the King of kings, one in the very depths of whose heart He rules.

For the leaven is still the rule of God, the living power of His kingdom. Like a little child in the tender, yielding stage of life, needing help, seeking help, coming to Jesus for help, the person has to yield himself to be moulded by this power divine. All the pride of manhood has to be laid aside; all trust in his own strength, knowledge, experience; all self-sufficiency. As if he were a little child, weak, ignorant, helpless, unable to provide for himself, guide himself, govern himself, the man has not only to bow to the will of God and accept His law, but to yield himself to the living power which accompanies it, to trust to that power, and to use it; letting himself be so overcome by it, that at last it holds perfect sway in his heart. Unless this is done, he will never be fit to be numbered amongst those prepared for the Lord.

Like little children they would have to become; and as little children the Spokesmen would have to treat them, dealing with their mistakes patiently, tenderly, lovingly. When some fault failed to be corrected, when some habit or weakness would not yield, there was to be no harshness, no stern judgment and ruthless casting away of the unyielding one; but like as when that Samaritan village had refused to receive Jesus and He had quietly led them away to another village, so the Spokesmen, when balked in one direction, were patiently and wisely to try another, to turn to another part of the person's nature, until at last the stubborn heart was won.

C.

ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

xviii. 18-30. The rich ruler.

The part which the evangelist chose for his closing illustration was the warning, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." It was a general rule, applying to the Spokesmen as well as to the people; to each in the place allotted to

him in the household of Christ. The work might differ both in kind and in degree; but to become fit for doing it and be a servant prepared for the Lord, all alike had to receive the kingdom of God as a little child; yielding willingly and readily to the inworking of the leaven, until the whole heart was transformed, and every hindrance to perfect service overcome. It was about the removal of one of those hindrances which keep people from "entering the kingdom" that the evangelist was now telling Theophilus.

The case selected was that of a man who was a ruler: a member of the local Sanhedrin; one of those whose duty it was to take charge of a synagogue and its services, and enable people to worship and serve God as they ought. Like the rest of his class, he would have been tested, and duly ordained to the office: but he had found that there was something hindering his perfect service, something about which he wanted to know; so he came to Jesus and asked Him. As a ruler he asked; and for his use as a ruler the answer was given him.

He spoke to Jesus as if he were one of His pupils: and what he wanted to know was something which members of the seventy, men whom Jesus was instructing to take charge of congregations of God's people, would also want to know. He asked what he would have to do to inherit everlasting life; the life spoken of in Dan. 12:1, 2, where it was foretold that the time would come when God's people would be saved, everyone who was written in the book; and many of them that slept in the grave would awake, some to everlasting life, and some to reproach and everlasting shame. As if to show how highly he thought of Jesus' skill in teaching, he addressed Him as "Good" Teacher, giving Him one of the titles of God—"The Good One" of the world—although he only regarded Him as a man.

By calling his attention to the expression he had used, Jesus not only reminded him of that reverence for God which lay at the foundation of his service as a ruler, the reverence

taught by the first part of the commandments, but also pointed out to the seventy that the right carrying out of the service for which He was preparing them depended upon their regard for Himself as God. For it was still the preparation of the Spokesmen for their work that the evangelist was setting before Theophilus. He had shown him how they had been trained by Jesus, and ordained by Him for their place of service in His household, and had also told him about the instructions Jesus had given them; and now, as if to leave them, like the measures of meal which were thoroughly leavened, wholly God's, yielding unreservedly to His will, ready to do whatsoever service He might require of them, he put the finishing touch to the account by showing him a last surviving hindrance to perfect service being removed.

The answer to the man's question was, "Thou knowest the commandments." If he would have that everlasting life, the will of God had to hold perfect sway in his heart; and he would inherit it by doing his duty as God's servant. As a ruler, his special work was to care for others; so the commandments mentioned all had to do with his duty towards his neighbour. They are arranged in a peculiar way; two of them being out of order. One of these is the commandment from which the test case showing the unchangeableness of the law was drawn; and this is put first to recall, by its place of prominence, the unchangeable leaven which Jesus used for teaching about the kingdom of God which all had to receive. The other, which is the commandment about obeying parents, was plainly meant to remind about receiving the kingdom of God as a little child.

Although that ruler had been keeping all those commandments from his youth, he found himself unable to do his work for God as he knew it ought to be done. There was something lacking in him. Some hindrance to the spread of the leaven was making him fail in his duty as a ruler, and was keeping him from inheriting eternal life. There



was a part of his nature into which the kingdom of God had not yet come; a part not yet ruled by the law of God. The unmentioned commandment, that upon covetousness, was not being kept by him: and he therefore lacked for doing his work as a ruler an unworldly and unselfish heart; a heart wholly taken up with the well-being of others, ever longing, ever ready to pour out its all for their good. What one in his position had to do in order to get rid of what was hindering him was then told him by the divine Teacher, Who gave him two commands to which he had to bow as to the commandments of God: for to inherit everlasting life he had not only to do the will of God as proclaimed on mount Sinai, but also as given by Jesus of Nazareth.

The first command had plainly to do with such work as that of supplying the needs of God's people; for it was, "Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor." Like a little child giving away things put into its hands, he had to distribute the things, called riches, which the Father had put into his hands. Obeying that command would have left him nothing of his own: but "he lendeth to the Lord, who hath pity on the poor, and according to his gift He will repay him"; and doing what Jesus told him would have laid up for him treasure in heaven, treasure belonging to the eternal life which he sought to inherit.

The hindrance which he had felt would have been swept away by obeying that command of Jesus: for hindrances to the spread of the leaven are broken down by doing the opposite; and the clinging to the things of the world would have been loosened by the giving. But that would only have cleared the way for receiving the kingdom of God. The entrance into it would have to be cleared; and that would be done by obeying the second command, "Come, follow Me." For that following meant giving himself wholly to Jesus and His service; bowing his will completely to His; caring for the needs of others in Jesus' way; acting under Him, with Him, and for Him in His God-given work; taught,

guided, helped by Him.. Obeying Jesus thus is doing God's will on earth as it is being done in heaven; and the man who does that has entered the kingdom of God; for he has entered the realm of perfect service.

When the ruler heard the words of Jesus he became very sorrowful; for he was very rich. He could not bring himself to sell all that he had and give it away to the poor; so instead of becoming a pattern to the pupils of Jesus, he became a warning to them of the danger of having riches. Jesus looked at the man; thus drawing all eyes to him: and with him standing there before them in his sadness, pointed out to them the difficulty which any one with riches would have in entering the kingdom of God. So hard would it be for the leaven to change the world-clinging state which riches cause, and to make the heart wholly God's, that it would be easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for one laden with riches to enter the kingdom of God.

If wealth, the great power in the world, is only a hindrance, "Who then is able to be saved?" His hearers exclaimed. And the answer came, "The things impossible with men are possible with God." Neither by his own strength, nor by any earthly means, can a man change his nature and become what God's work requires. It is only by the help of God that he can overcome, and cast away, what hinders him from doing God's will as an obedient child, and can enter that state of faithful service which is spoken of here as the kingdom of God.

Seeing that the man had failed in the very first stage of the path to be trodden, the evangelist was unable to make use of him for assuring Theophilus that by coming to Jesus, and following Him, those whom that ruler was representing would enter the kingdom of God, and inherit everlasting life; so he used instead men who could say, "Lo, we have left our own, and followed Thee." The one who made the declaration for himself and his fellows was Peter; the same whose case the evangelist had used as an example of the beginning of

the Helpers' training, and had shown how he forsook all and followed Jesus. The mention of his name would show Theophilus that what was said in answer to him was not to be taken as applying only to those who were then being instructed, that is to the Spokesmen, but also to the Helpers from whom they were drawn.

The seventy had given up their wealth, and means of wealth-getting, and, at the call of Jesus, had forsaken their homes as well and were following Him. The wants and woes of people could therefore have free entrance into their hearts; for by bowing to Christ's will and giving up their homes and home life, they had broken free from all those God-given, but absorbing, affections, and were ready, with hearts untrammelled, to serve Him in this work of mercy. They had followed the rule of workmen in the kingdom of God, that the work is everything, the doer nothing.

And the Good Teacher's promise to all who had done this was, that there was no one who had left house, or wife, or brethren or parents, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake—that is for the sake of becoming perfectly leavened, wholly Christ's, wholly given to the service of God—who would not receive manifold more in this time, things corresponding to the treasure in heaven that the ruler might have had, and in the world to come everlasting life.

With the assurance of that glorious hope, the outline of the Spokesmen's training ends.

## **PART IV.**

### **THE TEXT**

**ST. LUKE XVIII. 31.—XXIV. 53.**



## CHAPTER P.

ST. LUKE XVIII. 31.—XIX. 46.

(a). xviii. 31-34. (b). xviii. 35.—xix. 44. (c). xix. 45, 46.

(a).

xviii. 31-34. And he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written by the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of man. For he shall be delivered up unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spit upon: and they shall scourge and kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, and they perceived not the things that were said.

(b). 1.

35-43. And it came to pass, as he drew nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging: and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

And they that went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried out the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole.

And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God.

And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

2.

xix. 1-10. And he entered and was passing through Jericho. And behold, a man called by name Zacchæus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature. And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, To-day is salvation come to this house, for as much as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

3.

11-27. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear.

He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called ten servants of his, and gave them ten pounds, and said unto them, Trade ye herewith till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent an ambassage after him, saying, We will not that this man reign over us.

And it came to pass, when he was come back again, having received the kingdom, that he commanded these servants, unto whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading. And the first came before him, saying, Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds more. And he said unto him, Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds. And he said unto him also, Be thou also over five cities.

And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. He saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow; then wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank, and I at my coming should have required it with interest?

And he said unto them that stood by, Take away from him the pound, and give it unto him that hath the ten pounds. And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds. I say unto you, that unto every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him. Howbeit these mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

## 4.

28-40. And when he had thus spoken, he went on before, going up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when he drew nigh unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called the mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, Go your way into the village over against you; in the which as ye enter ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat: loose him, and bring him. And if any one ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say, The Lord hath need of him. And they that were sent went away, and found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to Jesus.

And they threw their garments upon the colt, and set Jesus thereon. And as he went, they spread their garments in the way. And as he was now drawing nigh, even at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen; saying, Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

And some of the Pharisees from the multitude said unto him, Teacher, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said, I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.



## 5.

41-44. And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

## (c).

45, 46. And he entered into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold, saying unto them, It is written, And my house shall be a house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of robbers.

**PART IV.**

**XVIII. 31.—XXIV. 53.**

**NOTES**

**WHAT JESUS TAUGHT AND DID.**



## CHAPTER P. XVIII. 31.—XIX. 46.

### INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT RULING

a. xviii. 31-34. b. xviii. 35.—xix. 44. c. xix. 45, 46.

*Gabriel.* (i. 32.) He shall be great.

*John.* (iii. 16.) I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose.

a.

xviii. 31-34. *Introduction.* The introduction to this chapter serves also as a general introduction to the five chapters which make up this part of the treatise. They all have to do with the fulfilment of prophecies about the Son of man, and describe the filling in of that wonderful God-given portrait of Him Who was to come. They begin with the coming of the King of Zec. 9, and end with the victory of the suffering Servant of Is. 53; whilst running through them all is the message of the voice in Is. 40: 5, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God."

A prophecy whose gradual fulfilment has been traced throughout the treatise is that of Moses in Deut. 18: 15, "A prophet of thy brethren, like unto me, shall the Lord thy God raise up to thee." Whoever fulfilled that prophecy had to act like Moses as the ruler of God's people; he had also to intercede for them, teach them, and train them; and he had

to tell them about their heritage and encourage them to seek it: and all these things he had to do as Moses himself had done, by raising up bands of men to help him. So we find that the evangelist has shown Theophilus that Jesus provided for the good tidings being made known, and people encouraged to accept them, by beginning with a band of twelve; the number which Moses had been told by God to choose (Num. 13: 3): that He started His next class of servants with seventy, as Moses at God's command had done (Num. 11:16) to help him to train the people by dealing with their mis-doings, teaching them, and strengthening them to do what was right: and that now that He was founding a third class of servants in the kingdom of God, He began with twelve, the same number that Moses had been told by God to choose (Num. 1:4). Those whom Moses chose were called Rulers of tribes, Commanders of thousands (Num. 1:16), Rulers of Israel (Num. 7:2). Ruling was their distinctive work: and under Moses, each of them ruled over one of the tribes of Israel. They also acted as leaders of the people in their God-directed march through the wilderness. When Jesus therefore, as the Prophet like unto Moses, made this highest class of servants in the kingdom of God begin with twelve, it was to show that the distinctive mark of its members would be that of rulers and leaders of the people of God. In keeping with the way in which the evangelist has been treating the relative importance of the orders—telling Theophilus that the lowest, when sent forth, went to the villages; and the next to the cities—he has begun this account of the highest by describing them as being taken up to Jerusalem, as if for the capital to be their headquarters.

We have now reached the topmost course of the framework which the evangelist built up for Theophilus. The foundation was Jesus; for there was no certainty about any of the things in which he had been instructed unless they could be shown to have come from Him. Then came the com-

mission of Jesus, and the work which the Father had sent Him to do; for about that work, and the commission to do it, such people as Theophilus had specially to know. After that came, course by course, the preparation and commissioning by Jesus of bodies of men to carry on the several parts of His work. First came those who were to help Him as the Preacher of good tidings to the poor; after that, those who were to act for Him as the suffering Servant; and lastly, those who were to serve Him as the King;—three in all: showing that it must have been about three orders that Theophilus had been instructed, and about which he had to know the certainty. To reach the highest order, men had to pass through the two lower, following the course of their creation by Jesus: a fact which the evangelist pointed out by tracing the course of the twelve through them both by means of their name of apostles.

The name “angels” would likewise belong to members of this highest order; that name having been given by Jesus to John the Baptist when he was being used as their type: but, to avoid confusion, they are called envoys in these notes. Changing the name makes no difference to the fact that they formed the highest order in the Church; and that Theophilus was made sure of what he had been taught about them, by being shown that it was Jesus Who founded the order, and gave it its power and its work.

The ground-work which the evangelist used in picturing all these things for him was the journey of the people of God through the wilderness. Moses had organized and fitted them for conquering Canaan, and making it the kingdom of God; so he pictured the Prophet like unto Moses organizing His people in like manner, and fitting them to conquer the world. There were, of course, many points of difference between the scene in the wilderness and the vision which the evangelist gradually unfolded. For instance, instead of marching compactly along like the Israelites under Moses, gathering in none by the way, fishers of men were shown go-

ing out on all sides and bringing in old and young from darkness to light, from death to life, to join the white-robed throng;—acting as Helpers of the Son of man. Others were pictured as moving about amongst the people, and caring each for a little group: seeking the lost, recalling the wanderers, raising the fallen and cleansing their soiled robes; teaching them what to do; helping the steps of the weak and faint-hearted:—acting for the suffering Servant. Then there were those whose work it was to rule over them all, and lead them on their way; about whom Theophilus was now being told.

There is a noticeable difference in the evangelist's treatment of this part of his plan. He is still certifying Theophilus of the things in which he had been instructed: but he no longer speaks as one would do who has gone through the training and the sending himself; nor does he deal so fully with the preparation and the work as he did with that of the Spokesmen. Instead of spending a whole division of the treatise upon their preliminary training to be Envoys, he has contented himself with making passing references to their marks of fitness by recording things spoken to all: such as the threefold rule of denying self, taking up their cross daily, and following Jesus; and the parable of the faithful and wise steward.

Of the things mentioned in the introduction, the betrayal and spiteful treatment are dealt with in the fourth chapter of this Part; the scourging, death, and resurrection in the fifth. What the first three chapters are about is pointed out by the three statements made at the end of the introduction: they understood none of these things; this saying was hid from them; they perceived not the things that were said.

The chapters are arranged so as to follow, in their order, the five parts of Gabriel's description to the Virgin Mary of the Child Who was to be born of her; as if to make the order of Envoys an unceasing reminder of the divinity

of our Lord. The first three chapters describe Him Who was to come: His greatness; how He acted as the Son of the Most High; and how He spoke of the future of His kingdom as One Who knew the plans of the Lord God Who gave it Him. Then He is shown as reigning over the house of Jacob for ever, and arranging the service of His kingdom; and lastly, He appears as the eternal King of the kingdom which has no end.

The subjects of the first three chapters also include John the Baptist's description of Christ the King; the chapters themselves being continuations of the three parts of chapter E.

The chapter under consideration has to do with Gabriel's declaration about the Child that "He shall be great." John had declared that great as he himself was, Jesus would be far greater: so great, in fact, that he was not worthy to fill the place of the meanest of His slaves; and Zechariah had foretold that it would be as its King that the Christ would come to Jerusalem. It was to become Envoys of Him in His greatness that the twelve were going up with Him to Jerusalem; the place of which it had been said that "Out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem": and it was no wonder that, with such a prospect before them, they had been unable to understand any of the things which He said to them about His humiliation and sufferings. So He began to open their understandings by showing them the kind of Leader they were following to Jerusalem, and the way in which He answered to the description of the prophets: thereby fitting them to act for Him in ruling His kingdom.

*Summary.* What Theophilus had been taught about the Envoys as the leaders of the Church was established by his being shown the kind of instruction about Himself as the Leader of God's people, the King Who was to come, which Jesus gave those with whom He founded the order.

First he was shown Jesus teaching them, by means of a



blind beggar, how their faith in Him as the Son of David was to lead on to their seeing in Him the God-sent Leader Who was to come, and following Him as such; and then, by His treatment of Zacchæus, a chief of the publicans, that to become His Envoys they would also have to be followers of Him as the Saviour come to seek and to save the lost.

After that he was shown a kingly feature which they were to have specially before them when acting as Christ's representatives, and dealing with His servants and people. That kingly feature was justness; about which they were taught through the man, in the parable of the pounds, who began to exercise his kingly office by promoting faithful servants and discharging the unfaithful, and likewise by blotting out of his kingdom all who would not have him as their king.

What he had been taught about the humility which was to mark them as Rulers was confirmed by the meekness and disregard of earthly pomp and power which Jesus showed when entering Jerusalem as the King, and by the humble part which the twelve had then to take; whilst his instruction about the way in which they were to bear themselves towards the obdurate was upheld by the sight of Jesus' grief over Jerusalem.

The closing scene—Jesus in the temple, as the King in His own house, dealing with those who broke the rule about its being a house of prayer—served to illustrate the lesson taught by the way in which the man in the parable had dealt with his enemies.

#### b. 1.

##### FOLLOWING THE SON OF DAVID

*Prophecy.* Is. xxxv. 5. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened.

*Beginning.* vii. 19. And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to the Lord, saying, Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another?

*Continuation.* xviii. 35-43. The healing of the blind beggar.

To those whom God rescued from the bondage of Egypt and made His own people, He gave the task of conquering the little land of Canaan, freeing it from heathenness, and making it His kingdom. To those whom He rescues from the bondage of sin and makes His own people, He has given the task of conquering the world, and making it His kingdom. The conquest of Canaan began at Jericho, and ended at Jerusalem. It took centuries to accomplish, and there were many leaders of the armies of God; but over them all, though usually unrecognized, was that mysterious Being to whom the first of those leaders bowed himself at Jericho, and obeyed as the Chief Captain of the host of the Lord. Before the conquest of the world would be accomplished ages would elapse, and there would also be many leaders of God's people; but over them all was to be He Who at Jericho, took His place at the head of the first band of those leaders as the Son of David.

Moses had laid his hands upon Joshua, and appointed him to the leadership: but, judging from the way in which he was urged to be strong, he was not naturally fitted for the office; and it was only when his eyes were opened at Jericho, and he saw in his visitor the Chief Captain under whom he was to serve, that he became fit. And those upon whom the Prophet like unto Moses laid His hands would not be fit to take the leadership unless their eyes were opened, and they saw Him as He appeared at Jericho.

The lesson, which upheld what Theophilus had been told about this qualification for the leadership, came through a blind man who was sitting by the wayside begging as Jesus drew near the place. The man acted as one who expected to be obeyed; making his enquiries about the multitude going by towards Jericho, and receiving the report: but otherwise, all that the onlookers could see proclaimed him to be unfit for a leader of men. Not only was he unable

to see the way, but he took no part at all in the onward march of the people, and sat by the wayside begging for earthly aid: a picture of that spiritual blindness and its fruits which make men unfit to be leaders of the people of God; the blindness which the twelve had shown when they understood none of the things which Jesus had told them.

The lesson they were receiving had begun with John the Baptist, shut up in the darkness of his prison, but seeking the light by sending to the Lord to ask Him, "Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another?" What they had learned from Jesus in answer to this was summed up in Peter's reply, that He is the Christ of God; and that was the stage of their knowledge which the blind man was representing. So sure was he that Jesus was He Who was to come and lead the people of God, that when it was reported to him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he at once shouted out, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

Those who had thrust themselves forward to lead the way for Jesus, "the multitude" whose tramp the man had heard, tried to silence him. As the word for "multitude" shows, they were a mass of people without any organization, or control; and, in this lesson to the twelve, represented those who would be opposed to anyone who was seeking to become fit to take part in this highest service of the Son of man. The man, however, dreading lest Jesus should pass him by, and leave him in his darkness and uselessness, cried out so much the more, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me."

The word which the evangelist has used for "crying out" is the same which was used in the account of the taking of Jericho, when God commanded that, at the sound of the trumpet, the people were all to cry out together. The cry that brought help to the hosts of the Lord brought help to the man in his blindness, and enabled him to take his place in the army of God—the cry to the Son of David, the guiding Light of God's people.

In the course of ages there would naturally have been many "Sons of David," heads of the house, successors of him who completed the conquest of Canaan, and made God's people victorious over all their foes: but there was only one who would repeat in the fulness of its glory that prophetic work of David; and that was the One foretold in Is. 11:1, 2, upon Whom the Spirit of the Lord would rest. Through Him God would come and save His people (Is. 35:4), and one sign of His coming would be that the eyes of the blind would be opened. That is how it was that, when Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought, the man's request as he stood before Him was, "Lord, that I may receive my sight"; so sure was he that Jesus was that Son of David through Whom the salvation of God was to come. And the answer was, "Receive thy sight. Thy faith hath saved thee." Faith in Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of David, the Bringer of the salvation of God, transformed the man; and, by giving him the sight which was needed for leading the people of God, saved him from being left as worthless, seated by the wayside begging.

Looking up with his eyes, as Joshua had done, he saw there before him the Chief Captain of the hosts of the Lord; and, as the God-sent Leader, he followed Him, glorifying God: showing, by his faith and his following, that he had the first mark of fitness for being amongst those whom Jesus was training to serve Him as heads of His people. For he had become one of those who look to Jesus alone for light, and guidance, and help for the onward march of the people of God; who bow to Him alone, and obey Him alone, believing Him to be the great God-given Leader of the host of the Lord, the only One Who can lead God's people aright, Who can give His followers the true light.

The scene ended with "all the people" giving praise unto God:—not the unorganized multitude, but those who now represented the people of God; an organized body, under the leadership of the Son of David. God's own people, The-

ophilus learned, rejoice at the sight of each addition to the ranks of those God-enlightened ones from whom the Envoys of Christ, the leaders of His people, are chosen.

b. 2.

FOLLOWING THE SAVIOUR OF MEN

*Prophecy.* Is. xl. 5. All flesh shall see the salvation of God.

*Beginning.* vii. 20. And when the men were come unto Him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto Thee, saying, Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another?

*Continuation.* xix. 1-10. The coming of salvation to the house of Zacchæus.

There was something else which men like Theophilus had been taught about those who were to become Envoys of Christ and act for Him as the Ruler of the people of God: something established by the present section. It is led up to by the same question about Jesus that had furnished the beginning of the instruction in the former section: showing that it also has to do with some well-known feature in the portrait of the Christ. The question this time was asked by the men whom the Baptist had sent; and asked by them in an off-hand way, as if they themselves could not see how anyone, who had gone of his own accord to the house of a Gentile after the man had declared himself to be unworthy, could possibly be He Who was to come. What Jesus now did answered the question in such a way as to show that, by deeds like that, He was fulfilling the prophecy of Is. 40:5 "All flesh shall see the salvation of God"; and that those who would act for Him had to be followers of Him as the Saviour of men.

In the scene set before Theophilus the twelve were still following Jesus, and being trained by Him, as He entered and was passing through Jericho; the place where Achan, an Israelite, in his greed for wealth had sinned. Joshua, the servant of Moses, upon whom Moses had laid his hands,

blotted out the man and his whole household from the congregation of the people of God: how were they as servants of the Prophet like unto Moses to treat offenders?

The man by means of whom they were taught this was called Zacchæus, or the just. The name had been given him at his enrolment amongst the people of God in the hope that it would be his distinguishing mark through life: but greed for wealth had robbed him of all claim to that title; and he had become a leading man amongst those whom the pursuit of wealth had cut off from communion with God's people, and made outcasts from His kingdom. For such men as Zacchæus the leaders of Israel held out no hope of restoration to the kingdom of God.

Not only was Zacchæus a chief publican, and therefore a leader of schismatics, but he was also very rich; which, in the case of a tax-gatherer of that age, meant that he had gone even beyond others in unjust exactions. By mentioning those two things about him, the evangelist pointed out the two parts of the lesson which the twelve were receiving. Both parts were drawn from what Jesus said and did: for it was the example of their Leader that furnished the rule which they would have to follow when acting as rulers of the people for Him.

Making use of the fact that Zacchæus was a chief publican, he first of all showed Theophilus how leaders of God's people were taught to treat schismatic leaders, and therefore their followers, who wished to return. Openly Zacchæus had severed himself from the people of God; and openly he showed his longing to return and be under the Son of David: for he ran on before the people, and in the sight of them all, climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him as He passed that way. Openly also, before all the people, Jesus called to him to make haste and come down, for it was His duty to abide that very day at his house. And the twelve could see that, to tread in the steps of the Son of David, they would have to be equally ready to recognize the wan-

derer, and to enter openly into fellowship with him, as soon as ever he, on his part, had openly shown his penitence and desire to return. Greeted thus, Zacchæus did at once what he was told to do; and making haste to come down, received Jesus under his roof with joy.

“Publicans and sinners” represented two distinct classes of offenders; but Zacchæus, in heaping up his riches, had been so notorious a breaker of God’s laws, that he served as an example of both. So well was he known that all the on-lookers murmured, saying that Jesus had gone in to lodge with a man who was a sinner. He had sinned openly; and he made amends openly. Standing before Jesus, as before the Lord, the Head of God’s people, he gave public proof of his repentance by announcing the gift of half of his goods to the poor, and by proclaiming his offer of fourfold restitution to all whom he might have defrauded.

Then the Saviour, speaking to him personally, openly proclaimed the restoration of himself and his household to the rights and privileges of the people of God. “Today is salvation come to this house,” the full salvation of God: for the sinner, having repented and made restitution, had been freed from the penalty of his sin; the separated one had been restored to his place amongst the children of Abraham, the inheritors of the covenant and the promise. Zacchæus had seen the salvation of God.

The account of the saving of Zacchæus began with his seeking to see the Saviour: but Theophilus learned that those who act for the Son of man as leaders of the people are not to be men who would wait for the lost, the separated, the sin-stained, to return of themselves; much less men who would cut them off as Achan had been; but men who seek them out, and do their utmost to save them: for they are to be like what the twelve were taught to be, followers of Him Who brought the salvation of God, the Son of man Who came to seek, as well as to save, that which was lost.

## b. 3.

## ACTING FOR THE JUST ONE

*Prophecy.* Zec. ix. 9. Behold the King cometh to thee just and saving.

*Beginning.* vii. 21. In that hour He cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and on many that were blind He bestowed sight.

*Continuation.* xix. 11-27. The parable of the pounds.

The note with which this section opens was meant to put the reader in touch with its contents, and to give him the key to the interpretation of the parable. The statement that it was as they heard these things that Jesus "added" and spake a parable pointed out that the prophecy now being dealt with required for its full understanding that the view of Jesus given in the former section should also be included; whilst the information that it was spoken "because He was nigh to Jerusalem" showed that it was the prophecy of Zechariah about the coming of its King. The rest of the reason for the giving of the parable, "they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear," pointed out the line which had to be followed in interpreting it.

Jerusalem, at that time, was teeming with Jews drawn from all parts of the known world; and the twelve evidently thought that Jesus was about to enter the city and proclaim the kingdom of God with Himself as King and themselves in the highest places under Him. All this, they thought, would take place at once; and the parable was spoken to them as to men who wanted to be furnished with the key to right service as rulers, so as to be fit to enter straightway upon their duties.

The Head on earth of the kingdom of God would, as they knew, be He Who was to come and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord; and Jesus, by curing many of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and bestowing sight upon many that were blind, had taught them that it was He Who



had come to proclaim that acceptable year, free God's people from their bondage, and enable them to fill their places in His kingdom. But although sent to do this, He was to be no mere messenger, but the King of Whom Zechariah had prophesied that He would be just and saving. With regard to His being saving, He had taught them that this part of the prophecy was fulfilled in Him by His treatment of Zacchæus, and by His declaration that "the Son of man came to seek, and to save, that which was lost": and now, by the parable which He added, He taught them about His justness, (which also had to be theirs,) and illustrated it by the governance of a kingdom; that being the way in which it would have to show itself in them when acting for Him.

The lesson came through the man in the parable who received a kingdom; a man of noble race, fit to teach them about the ways of their Lord which they were to follow. From those over whom he was to rule two classes were selected; his slaves, and his citizens: those especially bound to serve him, and those not.

In that part of the world a king's slaves, because of their unquestioning obedience, were used by him as channels of his will and power, and were chosen to fill the highest offices: so that the twelve would readily understand why the man, when about to receive a kingdom, should choose ten (a round number) from the mass of his slaves to form a special body—even as they themselves, when made Spokesmen, had been chosen by Jesus from those who were wholly His. These slaves he put to the test by giving to each of them the same sum,—the next to the highest piece of money—and telling them to carry on business for him till he came: his long absence whilst making the journey allowing ample time for the test to act.

In the kingdom of God true service comes from love; and it is from love for Jesus that people give themselves to Him as willing slaves: wherefore in the parable it is not his slaves, but "his citizens," those who were not the man's

slaves, who are described as hating him, and refusing point-blank to let him reign over them.

Such was the setting of the parable. Then came its real lesson, how he treated them when he came back a king.

The ten slaves were shown standing before him; gathered there at his command to tell him what they had done with his money, and to await his verdict. The maxim which he followed in dealing with them was one which the twelve already knew, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much"; and those who, by making good use of what had been trusted to them, had shown themselves to be faithful and wise stewards were praised, and placed in positions of trust whose importance varied according to what they had done: ruling henceforth as kings, one over ten cities, another over five; members of the highest order of servants in the kingdom. But one stood there with nothing in his hand but the pound which had been left with him. Both duty and love had been outweighed by fear. He had learned to know his lord as a stern, grasping man, and he was afraid of him; afraid lest, in his trading, he should lose the money, and, coming before him empty-handed, be punished for his loss. So he had taken great care of the pound; and had brought it back safe, but unused. That man the king condemned; for by his own words he had proved himself a wrong-doing slave. As a slave, it was his duty to do whatever he believed his lord wanted done; and, in this case, he could have done it by simply putting the money into a bank: for the care, which he thought there had to be taken of it, would have been taken by the bankers; and the increase, which he declared his lord was seeking, would also have been made by them. A man who failed in his duty like that was unfit to rule over others; and to him no city was given.

That was the first of the ways in which the doings of this man as king set forth the justness of Jesus; making the twelve see that the prophecy of Zechariah about the King

Who was to come to Jerusalem was being fulfilled in Him, and also teaching them about that attribute of His as King which all who act for Him as Rulers must know and have.

The first appointments in the kingdom of God would be made by the Son of man, like as those in the parable were made by the man; but after that it would fall to the lot of this highest order to provide Rulers for places into which the kingdom spread, and also to replace those Rulers who passed away. The principle upon which new Rulers were chosen would always be the same; that which Jesus was then teaching the twelve by the justness of the king in the parable who provided for the governance of his kingdom by appointing as rulers only those who had shown themselves fit for the office, and making the range of their duties depend upon the degree of fitness which they had shown.

In the next part of the parable the ten slaves are being regarded, not as newly appointed rulers, but as members of that chosen band whom the man had made his stewards—the second order of the ministry; and the lesson to the twelve was how the justness would show itself in the treatment of them.

In the kingdom of God there would be punishments as well as rewards. All who had shown themselves to be good stewards were left in charge of the trust committed to them: but as for the one condemned, the decree about him was, "Take away from him the pound, and give it unto him that hath ten pounds." In surprise, those whom Jesus was training exclaimed, "Lord, he hath ten pounds." As if in reply came the rule which was to be followed in His kingdom: "Unto every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him"; and the servant who did nothing with what was entrusted to him, the servant who made no progress, was to be degraded from the position of trust in which he had been placed.

As for the king's enemies, those who would not that he should reign over them, no explanations were sought for from them. They stood self-condemned; and the judgment upon them was swift and eastern. Hopelessly they were blotted out from his kingdom for ever: for none could be in it who were against the king, and refused to bow to his decrees.

Dreadful as this closing part of the parable is, it was recorded like the rest of it, to make Theophilus sure that what he had been taught about Envoys of Christ as Rulers of His kingdom was right; and that the swift casting out of the Church of all who refused to submit to the decrees of Jesus, and to own Him as their King, was one of the ways in which that quality of justness was to show itself.

b. 4.

LEADING IN MEEKNESS

*Prophecy.* Zec. ix. 9. He is meek and riding on a beast of burden and young foal.

*Beginning.* vii. 22. And He answered and said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them.

*Continuation.* xix. 28-40. The coming of the King.

"And when He had thus spoken, He went on before, going up to Jerusalem." This opening note showed Theophilus that the prophecy, whose fulfilment in Jesus the twelve were being taught to understand was still the same—that of Zechariah about the entrance of the King into Jerusalem,—and that the same personages were being kept specially before him; namely, Jesus and the twelve with whom He was beginning His Envoys, and whom He was now teaching how to rule.

From the parable they had just heard they had learned that their place in the kingdom would be that of kings, each

over a number of cities. Kings at that time were absolute monarchs: in their kingdoms they could do what they liked, and say what they liked; to them all had to bow, and everything done was for their glory, and theirs alone; so that the position of a king gave great scope for the masterfulness and pride of human nature. It may have been for that reason that the present lesson was given to the twelve. As its place in the chapter shows, it deals with something essential for the right carrying out of the duties of their office.

One part of that office was touched upon lightly in the report which the two messengers of John the Baptist were told to take to him of what they had seen and heard: the report which was arranged as if for an overseer taking note of the doings of those beneath him. But the twelve whom Moses had chosen had also to serve under him as leaders of the people; and those whom the Prophet like unto Moses chose would not only have to act as overseers of the rest of His servants, but also to act under Him as leaders of the people; and it was in connection with this that Jesus, their Pattern, went on before them, going up to Jerusalem. As He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, and came to the outskirts of the city at the mount of Olives, He paused; and, like an eastern king requisitioning as he went, sent two of His pupils to the village over against them to fetch a colt that was tied there. Animals brought to God had never to have borne the yoke; and this was one on which no man had ever sat.

The two whom He sent were to act for the time being as His envoys; representing to the twelve themselves in the office about to be theirs. Nothing corresponding to the powers of an earthly king of that time was to be exercised by them. It was for Jesus, and not for themselves, that the demand for the animal was to be made. Its owners were evidently men who acknowledged Jesus as their Lord; and He treated their goods as if they were His own. The animal was needed for Him to enter as King into Jerusalem, the

place whose capture closed the conquest of Canaan; and for Him the two, as His envoys, were to demand it: and for Him His Envoys can still demand the things that He needs for entering as King into the conquered world. The two, moreover, were allowed no will of their own, no voice of their own. They had to speak the words which Jesus put into their mouths; to do what He said they were to do; and to make answer just as He told them: like as His Envoys have to serve Him in His way, and not their own; make demands of His people for Him, and not for themselves; and speak, as it were, with His voice. The two pupils, acting as men under Jesus and obeying His orders, carried out their instructions to the letter; and when the owners said to them, "Why loose ye the colt?", replied word for word as commanded, "the Lord hath need of him," and brought him to Jesus.

It must, from all this, have been plain to the twelve that the prophecy which was being accomplished in Jesus was that of Zechariah, "He is meek, and riding on a beast of burden and young foal"; and that the words which they would have to speak as His Envoys would therefore be the words of the Meek One, and the things which they would have to do as His Rulers would be things which He as the Meek One would order.

The rest of the account still exemplified the training which Jesus had given to fit men for the highest order: showing Theophilus how they had been taught to regard Him, and what had always to be in their hearts and minds when ruling His people for Him.

When Jehu, by God's command, had been anointed king, the leaders of the hosts of Israel placed their garments under him on the top of the stairs, to show that they each and all recognized him as their leader and their king; and the twelve, for the same reason, put theirs on the colt, and set Jesus thereon. And there He sat, meekly riding on a beast of burden and young foal; a pattern for all who would

afterwards lead the people of God for Him: for like as He was leading them in meekness, so would they have to lead those whom He placed under them.

John the Baptist, the Envoys' type, without belittling his own greatness, had declared himself to be unworthy even to loosen the shoe's latchet of Him Who was to come: and the twelve, whilst believing that they were already entering their high position in the kingdom of God, made a like declaration by spreading their garments on the ground for Him to ride over as He went on His way, their Leader and their King,—kings bowing down to the King. Meek as He is, His Envoys have to humble themselves in the dust before Him; and, as Rulers of His people, not only own Him as their King, but, being His representatives, lead and rule them in the meekness which He showed.

It was when the Son of David was drawing near to Jerusalem, and was at the descent of the mount of Olives—the path up which David had gone barefoot and weeping, a betrayed man, deserted by his people—that the song of praise arose. It came, not from one here and there, but from all the pupils of Jesus. The whole body of them joined in that song of praise—members of the lowest order (of which the twelve had only been the beginning), members of the second order, and members of the little band with whom the highest order was being begun, and about whose training Theophilus was now being told. They rejoiced; and, with a loud voice, they praised God for all the mighty works which they had seen: not only what Jesus Himself had done, but what had been done by those whom He ordained, and sent to carry on His work. For all these things they praised God: giving the glory to Jesus; taking none to themselves. Him, their Leader, they all hailed as the King Who came in the name of the Lord; having the power of God; acting for Him; the Head of His kingdom. At the birth of Jesus messengers of God had sung of Him as coming from the midst of the glory in the highest and bringing peace on earth among men of

God's good pleasure: now messengers of Jesus were picturing Him as retracing His steps, and leading His chosen ones, those in whom God was well pleased, into peace in heaven itself, into the glory of God; and to Him, their Leader and their King, they ascribed all that was done, extolling Him in His meekness as the Doer of it all, and giving glory to God the Father through Him. In meekness He was leading them in the name of the Lord; and in meekness His Envoys would likewise have to lead the people, in His name, through troubles and trials into the peace in heaven, through sufferings and afflictions into the glory in the highest.

That Theophilus was meant to regard what took place as representing Jesus' own teaching, the teaching which He gave to those whom He was training to be His Envoys and to rule for Him, the evangelist showed plainly by what he told him about the Pharisees, those unworthy shepherds of the people so often mentioned in the training of the second order. It was a teacher's place to correct his pupils when they went wrong, or misunderstood his teaching; and as those who cried out were Jesus' pupils, under His own training, the Pharisees called upon Him, as being their Teacher, to rebuke them. His answer was to the effect, that not only were those pupils of His quite right in what they said, but so essential was that which they proclaimed, and for which they were praising God, that if they, representatives of the services which He had created, were to hold their peace, the very stones, representatives of the voiceless creation, would cry out.

b. 5.

MOURNING OVER REJECTORS

*Prophecy.* Deut. 18: 19. The man who shall not listen to whatsoever words that prophet shall speak in My name, I will take vengeance on him.

*Beginning.* vii. 23. Blessed is he whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in Me.



*Continuation.* xix. 41-44. Jesus weeping over Jerusalem.

What Theophilus was next assured of was something about which members of the second order, with their power and responsibility, might well want to know. If rightly or wrongly, their views of their duties should bring them into conflict with the member of the highest order who was over them, how ought they to be treated? The vengeance of God would fall upon those who would not listen to the Prophet: were the Envoys who represented Him to crush with that vengeance those who would not listen to them?

The answer is given in this section, which, after the fashion of the former chapters, was meant to show Theophilus how Envoys were to bear themselves towards those under their charge. The way was the way of Him Whom they represented; the example which He set them as He gazed upon Jerusalem, the Son of David viewing the rebellious city.

Like the rest of the things in this chapter, the scene was used by the evangelist to set forth a lesson which was being given to the twelve. A like use of the city had been made before by Jesus in the course of His teaching. When training the Spokesmen, the men who were to be to their people like fathers to the households under their care, He had spoken of it and its people as if it were a mother and her family; and that figure He continued to use here. Both then and now the city stood for what a Spokesman of Christ ought not to be. In the former case she was represented as driving away the prophets and messengers of God who came with counsel and help for her children; in this, as letting her children fall into danger because she did not know the things which belong to peace, and would not give heed to Jesus.

He was there as the Messenger of great counsel, spoken of in Is. 9:6, of whose peace there is no end. The things which belong to that peace are those which John the Baptist, as the type of the Spokesmen, was to give people to enable them to keep the commandments of God. They are

the knowledge of salvation in the remission of sins, the light in darkness, and guidance into the way of peace: things about which Jesus had taught His Spokesmen, but which Jerusalem, the representative of unfit Spokesmen, did not know. Neither could she learn, although He was there bringing peace, because she found occasion of stumbling in the meek and lowly way in which He came. The Prophet like unto Moses had spoken, and she had given no heed to His words; wherefore the judgment of God would come upon her. Like as the priests and false prophets of Jer. 6:14, with their "peace, peace" perished in the time of visitation, so Jerusalem would perish, because, not knowing the time of her visitation, she did not take heed and repent.

It was during this "time of her overseeing" that Jesus came as the King to inspect Jerusalem; and it was from the way in which He then behaved, that the twelve learned what the attitude of those who represented Him was to be on like occasions towards those symbolized by Jerusalem. It was that of the Saviour of men; for, as shown by the words "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou," the opportunity was offered her to turn once more to the things of peace. But she cast all hopes away by refusing to recognize the King in His lowliness; and now the time had past. The house which had been left to her she was unable of herself to defend; and she would not receive Him Who came "in the name of the Lord." So the doom of those who would not listen to the Prophet was pronounced upon her, and her place in the kingdom of God was taken away: but it was with tears of sorrow that Jesus did it, warning and urging to the last; full of pity for the perishing. And so had His Envoys to bear themselves towards the ignorant and rebellious who were under them.

## C.

## THE LORD'S HOUSE

xix. 45, 46. The cleansing of the temple.

In the lesson upon the justness which Rulers for Jesus were to show, the closing act of the man was to have his enemies (those who would not that he should reign over them) brought into his presence, and slain before him. As Theophilus had been told, it was a parable, and therefore not a description of what they were actually to imitate. How Jesus Himself acted was shown, in the cleansing of the temple, by His treatment of people sunk in worldliness; who certainly would not have been willing that He should reign over them.

The temple here represents not only gathering places for public worship, but also the house of the Lord, of Is. 2, which would be upon the top of the mountains; the great gathering-place of many nations. The place which the house of God was to fill and hold in the hearts and lives of His people was shown by the way in which the Israelites, under the twelve whom Moses had chosen, were made to camp around the tabernacle, so that not only would it be shielded from harm, but all hearts and eyes could at any time be turned to that place of prayer. In the tabernacle the light of God's presence was sought; in the house of the Lord, His salvation which all flesh should see. How His house was to be kept so that all would be able to find salvation in it, those who were following Jesus learned when they saw Him enter the temple as the King into His palace.

Of all who were in the temple when He entered it, only those who were selling were singled out for Theophilus to look at; for it was through them that he was to be assured about this duty of the highest order. The things sold were those which people needed for their acts of worship. Taking advantage of the worshippers' necessities they raised the prices; wherefore Jesus did not speak of them as thieves—

that is, as men who were taking money from people's pockets by underhand means—but as robbers, men who were taking it by force; for they forced money out of people by means of the worship of God.

He began to cast them out; and what Jesus began to do, His Envoys have to go on doing: casting out of the service of the Church all who make godliness a means of gain. The King's rule is, that His house is to be a house of prayer; a place where His people may enter freely into the presence of God, and plead to Him, and make their needs known to Him. They have to come to it, as in Is. 2:3, to learn His way; resolved, by His grace, to walk in it: and His Envoys have to show forth His justness in dealing with them by seeing that, when they do turn their backs on the world, and seek the salvation of God, there is nothing to hinder them; sweeping away all who break the rule and hinder those who would keep it.

## CHAPTER Q.

ST. LUKE XIX. 47.—XXI. 4.

(a). xix. 47, 48. (b). xx. 1-47. (c). xxi. 1-4.

(a).

xix. 47, 48. And he was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy him: and they could not find what they might do; for the people all hung upon him, listening.

(b). 1.

xx. 1-8. And it came to pass, on one of the days, as he was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the gospel, there came upon him the chief priests and the scribes with the elders; and they spake, saying unto him, Tell us: By what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority.

And he answered and said unto them, I also will ask you a question; and tell me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men?

And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, From men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

And they answered, that they knew not whence it was.

And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

2.

9-18. And he began to speak unto the people this parable: A man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country for a long time.

And at the season he sent unto the husbandmen a servant, that

they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. And he sent yet another servant: and him also they beat, and handled him shamefully, and sent him away empty. And he sent yet a third: and him also they wounded, and cast him forth. And the lord of the vineyard said, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned one with another, saying, This is the heir: let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. And they cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He will come and destroy these husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. But he looked upon them, and said, What then is this that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner? Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust.

## 3.

19-26. And the scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him in that very hour; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he spake this parable against them. And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which feigned themselves to be righteous, that they might take hold of his speech, so as to deliver him up to the rule and to the authority of the governor.

And they asked him, saying, Teacher, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, and acceptest not the person of any, but of a truth teachest the way of God: Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? And they said, Cæsar's. And he said unto them, Then render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.

And they were not able to take hold of the saying before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

## 4.

27-44. And there came to him certain of the Sadducees, they which say that there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, Teacher, Moses wrote unto us, that if a man's brother die, having

a wife, and he be childless, his brother should take the wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died childless; and the second; and the third took her; and likewise the seven also left no children and died. Afterward the woman also died. In the resurrection therefore whose wife of them shall she be? for the seven had her to wife.

And Jesus said unto them, The sons of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

But that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed, in the place concerning the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

And certain of the scribes answering said, Teacher, thou hast well said. For they durst not any more ask him any question.

And he said unto them, How say they that the Christ is David's son? For David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. David therefore calleth him Lord, and how is he his son?

## 5.

45-47. And in the hearing of all the people he said unto his disciples, Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love salutations in the market places, and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts; which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater condemnation.

## (c).

xxi. 1-4. And he looked up, and saw the rich men that were casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.

And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than they all: for all these did of their superfluity cast in unto the gifts: but she of her want did cast in all the living that she had.

## CHAPTER Q. XIX. 47.—XXI. 4.

### INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT JUDGING

*a.* xix. 47, 48. *b.* xx. 1-47. *c.* xxi. 1-4.

*Isaiah.* ii. 3. Out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem.

*Gabriel.* i. 32. He shall be called the Son of the Most High.

*John.* iii. 16. He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

*a.*

xix. 47, 48. *Introduction.* The scene chosen by the evangelist to introduce the next part of his outline of the training of the twelve was Jesus teaching daily in the temple, with the rulers seeking to destroy Him, and all the people hanging upon Him, listening—listening to the law which was going forth out of Sion, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem. It forms a sequel to that scene in the temple when Jesus began sweeping out worldliness from it. Then He was restoring the building to its proper spiritual state as a house of prayer: now He was dealing with the people in it; and the rulers, who had allowed it to become a den of robbers, were seeking to destroy Him and stop the work which His teaching was doing. That work the twelve were to carry on for Him, and in His way; but at present they were unfit to undertake it, because something was hiding His word from them.

The part of the Christ-portrait which Jesus was then



filling in was that to which Gabriel was referring when he declared that Jesus would be called the Son of the Most High. It was a title given in Ps. 81:6 (Sep. Ver.) to judges; the verse in which they are also spoken of as being gods, that is, beings who of themselves decide what is to be accounted right, and what wrong; whose decrees none may change, or resist; so that it was of Jesus as the Judge of God's people that Gabriel spoke. It was also of Him as filling that office that John the Baptist had spoken when he described Him as baptizing with the Holy Ghost and with fire. In this chapter, however, the evangelist has said nothing about His baptizing with the Holy Ghost; not only because the Holy Ghost was not yet being given, but because he had already touched upon it in its proper place at the close of his outline of the Helpers' work of preparing people for Baptism. What he has dealt with is that which follows baptism with the Holy Ghost—baptism with fire; and he has done it in such a way as to show that the prophecy of Is. 4:3, 4 was being fulfilled by Jesus—the prophecy which foretold that all whose names were written unto life would be called holy; for the Lord would purify them with the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning.

Day after day the twelve saw Jesus teaching in the temple with all the people gathered around Him, listening; as in the days of old they had all stood around Moses from morning until evening whilst he sat and judged them. Moses at first gave judgment upon each, and taught them the ordinances of God and His law (Ex. 18:16); but afterwards he entrusted the smaller cases to chosen men, and kept the weightier matters for himself. And the Prophet like unto Moses was doing the same. He had, as the twelve well knew, committed the lesser judgments to the Spokesmen; and He was now dealing with the weightier matters, making known to the people the ordinances of God and His law. There were wrong views to be condemned and swept away; wrong teachings, heresies and such like; and He was

making His healers clean by the word which He spake unto them—baptizing them with fire as John had expressed it: teaching them daily, for their needs were unceasing.

He taught with authority. It was His house, and He spoke as One Who alone had the right of speaking there. What He said about the ordinances of God and His law had to be accepted by His hearers as their true meaning and application, the word of God Himself, because it was He Who said it: what He said about the unseen world was to be regarded as coming from One Who had personal knowledge of that world. It was this way of teaching that had brought the chief priests, the scribes, and the first of the people into conflict with Him.

“The chief priests and the scribes sought to destroy Him; and the first of the people.” The chief priests were over the other priests and the temple worship; they were the spiritual rulers. The scribes, as before, were judges and lawgivers; explaining and enforcing the laws of God. The first of the people were the popular leaders. It was the chief priests and scribes that were being used, like the Pharisees had been in the Spokesmen’s training, to represent unworthy rulers; men unfit to be heads of the Church, unfit to declare the ordinances of God and His law. Their being associated in such a peculiar way with the “first of the people” was to point out the way in which they were being regarded. Those first of the people, as the name given then was meant to show, stood first in their sphere; none were over them; they were the heads, and to them the people looked up for guidance and light in worldly matters. The authority which they exercised was man-made, man-given. They gained and kept their position by worldly power, worldly wisdom; and it was as being first of the people, and tainted with those fruits of the spirit of the world, that the chief priests and scribes were being used in this training of the twelve as representing men unfit for the highest order.

They sought to destroy Jesus, but failed because the people were all hanging upon Him, listening. Like as the people were Jesus' shield against those chief priests, scribes, and first of the people, so would they be the shield of His Envoys who, faithful to their trust, corrected and purified those under them.

The position of the twelve as members of the highest order would be one of great power and authority. They would have to dictate to those under them; charge them to teach, or not to teach, such or such a doctrine; reprove, rebuke, exhort them: and such people as Theophilus had to be assured of their right to do such things. The way in which the evangelist assured him was by giving him the following outline of the training which they received in the temple as they watched Jesus correcting those chief priests and scribes, men who were doing like work to their own in the Jewish Church; training which was to fit them to act for Him as the Judge Who baptized with fire: learning from the way in which He treated them, how they themselves would have to act when baptizing with fire.

*Summary.* The twelve were still with Jesus as His friends; standing, as it were, behind the scenes and watching how He dealt with those who came to Him. The outline, given in this chapter, of what they learned is drawn from His dealings in the temple with the rulers of the Jews. Following the plan of the chapters upon the training of the Spokesmen, the first two sections show what kind of men they were to be, and the last three how they were to serve Jesus as His representatives.

They learned that their first mark of fitness for doing this part of their work was to be the certainty that the authority which Jesus exercised in doing His work, (that is, the authority which would be given them), was divine: their second mark that they were to be faithful servants of God, tending His people solely for Him, and building up His kingdom according to His plan.

It was as the Judge, deciding upon a hard question brought to Him, that they would have to serve Him; and their work for Him was to be done as He showed them in the temple when He baptized people as it were with fire, and swept away error by making the truth clear, teaching people about the unseen world and about Himself. As for their attitude towards those under them, they learned about that from His condemnation of the vanity and self-seeking of the scribes.

An example of Jesus' judging, judging offerings made to God, closes the outline.

### b. 1.

#### SURE OF THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY

*Beginning* vii. 24. What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken with the wind?

*Continuation.* xx. 1-8. The kind of authority.

When speaking about the kind of man people were to expect a messenger of His to be, Jesus had suggested a reed shaken with the wind; but only to reject it. Any one who could be swayed to and fro by the breath of public opinion, who could be turned this way and that way by outside influences, or shaken in the stand the Master had set him to take, was clearly unfit to be used as an Envoy of Christ. They would have to meet with firmness and steadfastness both the opposition they would have to face when acting for Him, and the many influences which would be brought to bear upon them to make them waver in the stand they ought to take; and much would depend upon what they thought of the authority given them for doing their work. That authority came from Jesus: so the evangelist, in assuring Theophilus of what he had been taught about it, went to the Fountain-Head, and showed him what Jesus taught the twelve about it when He was attacked for teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel to them.

The teaching was that which He gave as Judge and Law-

giver; the preaching, that telling of the good tidings which formed the first part of His work—that is, the last part of His work and the first. Mentioning them thus was the evangelist's way of covering all between, and setting before Theophilus all the teaching which the Envoys would have to give and ordain men to give.

The chief priests, scribes, and elders who came upon Him represented the Sanhedrin, the governing body, the great source of authority amongst the Jews. Of the three, the chief priests, who are put first here, were those especially responsible for the state of things in the temple when Jesus began to cleanse it. Without asking their leave He had stopped the selling which they had allowed, and was also reforming the people by teaching them in it; so they challenged His authority by asking Him two questions: first, by what kind of authority He was doing those things, and secondly, from whom did He receive it.

For the kind of authority He used, He referred them to that of John the Baptist. It was the good tidings of the kingdom of God that He was preaching, and He asked them about something which led up to what He was saying; namely, the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?"

John's message of repentance was clearly valueless, and his baptism worthless, unless it were a heaven-given message, a divinely instituted baptism. His baptism of repentance, however, was but a link in a chain. As the evangelist had shown in the first chapter by the outline which he gave of John and his message, the baptism of repentance, the remission of sins to which it led, and the work of the ministry were all linked together with Christ as the King, the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and were all part of the same plan. That was why it was that they reasoned with themselves, saying, "If ye shall say from heaven, He will say, Why did ye not believe him?" that is, believe what John had said about Christ, the Baptizer with

the Holy Ghost and with fire, Whom his baptism of repentance heralded. None who admitted that the authority to assure the penitent of the efficacy of their repentance was from heaven, could refuse to recognize the authority to do this work of the Christ as also being divine.

Much as they would have liked to condemn it as man-made, man-given, they were afraid of "the people." The successors of those chief priests, scribes, and leaders of the people might oppose, reject, and seek to destroy the authority of Christ as used by His Envoys, but the people as a body, the Church at large, would ever be its defence, because they held that the "baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins," with which it is bound up, is from heaven.

The answer of those who challenged Jesus about His authority was that they did not know whence the baptism of John was: whereupon Jesus refused to tell them by what kind of authority He did those things. Nor would His Envoys be bound to tell those who challenged them what authority it was by which they did His work. It was enough for gainsayers to know that it was the same that Jesus used.

## b. 2.

### FAITHFUL WORKERS FOR GOD

*Beginning.* vii. 25. But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

*Continuation.* xx. 9-19. The grasping husbandmen.

Their second question, "Who gave thee this authority?" received no direct answer either, though it was made plain enough by the parable of the husbandmen, and by what Jesus said about the corner-stone. It was to the people that He now began to speak, like as once before He had begun to speak to the multitudes concerning John; and Theophilus would still understand that the listening twelve were meant

to apply it all to themselves, and that in it he was to find support for what he had been taught.

Those people standing around Jesus in the temple represented God's own people, His Church. For their sake it was that He was training men like the twelve to become leaders, rulers and guardians; and the parable was spoken to them because He would have them know the kind of men that He was setting over them. Those whose ideas of the kingdom of God were formed from their knowledge of earthly kingdoms would have expected to hear about men clothed in soft raiment, like the gorgeously apparelled ones who lived delicately and were attached to the courts of kings: but instead of that, they heard about vineyard labourers. They were not day-labourers; though it was plain that they would have to be men who worked faithfully and well all the day long if they would tend that vineyard properly. Its lord, having to go away for a long time, left them in sole charge, to draw their support from it, and to tend it as if it were their own: thus showing that the view which the twelve were being taught to take of themselves and their work was that the people were God's husbandry, and they themselves caretakers of the vineyard of God.

But the man in the parable never gave up his ownership of the vineyard; a fact that was in due time brought home to the husbandmen by the demand which he sent through his slave for some of its fruit. They had, however, grown so used to looking upon the vineyard as their own, that they resented the demand as an invasion of their rights; and, having beaten the slave, they sent him away empty. It was not one or two of the husbandmen who did this, but the whole set of them. They were all pictured as being the same, and behaving like a band of robbers; showing how natural it would be for those in charge of God's people to grasp at power, and hold their Lord's heritage as if it were their own.

The lord of the vineyard dealt very patiently with his

erring servants; but there was no mistaking the teaching of the parable, that he insisted upon their recognizing that the vineyard was not theirs, but his, and to be tended for him. He added to his list of messengers another slave, and yet another, until three had been sent; to show that he gave a full fair trial to that way of reminding those husbandmen, and making them acknowledge their place and their duty. But when servants of God give way to thirst for power and treat His vineyard as their own property, all His reminders are without avail; and the demand is described as having been rejected with growing violence.

Then he sent one who would be able to speak in his name, and act for him; one who would not only represent him, but would speak with his voice; his own son: but him the husbandmen cast out of the vineyard, as if he were a trespasser, and killed him so as to have it for their own. And the people who were being represented by the vineyard, the picture of God's kingdom, were asked what the lord of the vineyard would do to those men who had seized on it thus for themselves. The answer was given by Jesus Himself, and was in keeping with what He had begun to do to those who made God's house a den of robbers. He would destroy them all, and give the vineyard to others.

For the parable to close like that, however, was not to the liking of His hearers; and they exclaimed, "Let it not be so." But Jesus replied by putting it in another way: looking at the people, as He spoke, to show that it was of Himself He was speaking, and that He was vouching to them for what would take place, He pictured the kingdom of God, whose good tidings He had been preaching to them, not as a vineyard, but as the house of God, and those in charge of it as builders; men whose duty and work it would be to build it up according to the plan which had been given them. Like the husbandmen they had gone their own way; but the stone which they had rejected as unfit for the house



of God, according to their view of what that house ought to be, was made the head of the corner, the place which the master-builder had assigned to it. Christ Himself is the great Corner-Stone; so that the answer to those who demanded the source of His authority was that the place which He was filling in the house of God had been given Him by the great Master-BUILDER, God the Father, and that the authority by which He did those things came from God.

Then connecting the builders with the husbandmen by speaking of them as if they were earthenware vessels such as would be used for receiving the fruit of the vineyard and bearing it to the owner, He showed the same fate befalling them as that which had shocked the people about the husbandmen. What destroyed them was clashing with Him Whom the corner-stone represented. This He explained by taking the two views of the stone given in the verse He had quoted, and showing the result of such attacks as His opponents were then making upon Him. An earthen vessel falling upon the stone as it lay on the ground rejected would be broken in pieces; and a like fate would follow any attack upon Him in His humility as the rejected of men: whilst like as the corner-stone falling down from its high place upon a vessel would scatter it in pieces as small as dust, so would He, as Head of the Church of God, crush any who disputed His authority.

Those to whom Jesus would entrust the upbuilding of His Church were to be faithful workers for God, workers together with Him: tending it as being ever His vineyard, and working, not for themselves, but for Him: building it up, not according to their own plans, but according to the plan which God had laid down; putting in its right place the Corner-stone which He had provided.

## b. 3.

## ACTING FOR THE JUDGE

*Beginning.* vii. 26. But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

*Continuation.* xx. 19-26. Tribute to Cæsar.

After the kind of man that Jesus would use for the work comes the character in which He wanted to be represented, and therefore resembled, by those whom He was training.

The case chosen by the evangelist for showing Theophilus this was when He dealt with men in a corresponding position who had shown themselves unfit for their trust. The men were scribes; those who acted as judges and correctors of the people. The mention of the chief priests, the spiritual rulers of the people, showed that it was as having to do with things pertaining to the house of God that they were being regarded; whilst saying that in that very hour they sought to lay hands on Jesus showed that they had the failing, fatal to this part of the service of Christ, which had made the unfaithful husbandmen slay the lord of the vineyard's son; that of grasping for power. With this masterfulness went cowardice: because of the parable they feared the people—those in their charge, whose rulers they ought to have been—for the people now knew what Jesus' opinion of them was. Then came the offspring of cowardice, underhandedness: they did not dare openly to attack Jesus and His position over the people, but sent spies feigning themselves to be righteous men seeking light on a troublesome question, and coming to Him as people had formerly come to Moses.

Like John the Baptist, those whom Jesus was training would be prophets, and much more than prophets—Spokesmen, and much more than Spokesmen. The prophets of old sought to win wanderers back to God; they tried to make

the people know His will, and urged and helped them to do it: but it was not part of their duty as prophets to rule and lead them. Nor did they, in cases where special guidance was sought, decide of themselves; but enquired of God, and gave the people the answer they received directly from Him. Envoys of Christ, however, would have to decide of themselves, and lead the people, as His representatives. As baptizers with the Holy Ghost and with fire they would not only have to sweep away doubt, and error, and their evil fruits; but also to give their people the light and guidance for which they would come.

What took place made something clear to the twelve how it was possible for the Son of man to be delivered up to the Gentiles. And as their Lord was treated, so must His servants who were true to Him also expect to be treated. Those scribes and chief priests, representatives of unworthy Envoys, stopped at nothing to bolster up their own power, and keep their hold on the vineyard of God. They were even ready to recognize the state as being above the kingdom of God, the civil authority above their own; for they sought to deliver Jesus up to the power of Rome and to the authority which before had been hidden from them; for it showed them of the Roman governor. With this end in view their spies came to Him with a knotty question of right and wrong, as if they were God's true people seeking guidance.

By the quotations which he made from what they said, the evangelist first of all drew for Theophilus a picture of Jesus as the twelve were now being taught to resemble Him—the upright Judge. He spoke and taught rightly; He did not accept the person of any, but taught of a truth the way of God. In like manner His Envoys were to speak and teach. The rank of the person to whom they were speaking was to make no difference to them. They had to teach the way of God as it really was, without altering it in the least to suit their hearers.

Now the question which the twelve heard Jesus asked was one whose answer was very likely to be affected by regard for the person of men; for it had to do with church and state, and the state was the great empire of Rome in whose power the people of God, humanly speaking were. "Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?"

It was not the kind of question, but the reason for asking it, which kept the twelve from hearing a full plain answer given. Envoys of Christ are not bound to answer every enquiry made of them; but only such as come from people who are honestly seeking light and aid. The answer which they heard Him give only went as far as the question was connected with a commandment which the questioners already knew, "Thou shalt not steal"; and even then He made them apply it themselves.

The scene before them was very impressive. There stood the questioners looking at the coin for which Jesus had asked; the tribute money bearing Cæsar's name and image. Beside them were the people of God, made in His image and bearing His name; the vineyard which the scribes and Pharisees who had sent them had seized upon, and were using for themselves. Around them was the temple of God, which they had treated in like manner. And the answer which the twelve heard given was, "Give back to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

"They were unable to take hold of the saying before the people." The people were against them, and their power was gone. Their attack had failed. They had fallen upon the Stone, and had been broken. The reply, moreover, had astonished them. It was unexpected, unanswerable; and they had not a word to say. The Stone had fallen upon them, and had crushed them completely.

## b. 4.

## BAPTIZING WITH FIRE

*Beginning.* vii. 27. This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

*Continuation.* xx. 27-44. The attack of the Sadducees.

After picturing Jesus in the character in which the Envoys were to act for Him, the evangelist went on to show Theophilus how He taught them to serve Him in that character.

Like John the Baptist they were to be angels, or messengers, of God; sent before the face of His people to furnish the way thoroughly before them. The angel to whom He likened John was to guard the people of Israel in the way, and lead them to the conquest of the allotted land: and His Envoys had to do the same; to guard God's people on their way by driving away ignorance and error, and lead them on to the conquest of the world. To show Theophilus how they were taught to do this work, the evangelist set before him Jesus their Pattern, Jesus the Baptizer with fire, dealing with vital things about which His people had always to be thoroughly informed.

It is still as the Judge, teaching in the temple, and attacked by the leaders of the people, that Jesus is being viewed. This time those who came to Him were Sadducees. The sect to which they belonged held that there was no such thing as a resurrection of the dead. The views held by the rest of the people, and therefore by those who had become followers of Jesus, were those of the Pharisees. According to Josephus, what they taught about the resurrection was, that the souls of the bad would be subject to eternal punishment, but the souls of good men would be removed into other bodies. In the case which the Sadducees set before Jesus as the Judge, for Him to say what God would do,

the number seven showed that the law of Moses had been perfectly carried out, and that they were all to be regarded as being amongst the just, and therefore amongst those who had a place in the resurrection—if there were one.

The case which they took was that of a woman who had had seven husbands; and the line which their argument followed was evidently this. They pictured her, at the resurrection, as standing with the whole seven of them, waiting to be told by God whose wife she was to be. Each of them was duly married to her according to the law of Moses, and was therefore her true husband; and as all were childless, and all were brothers, each one's claim to her was exactly the same as that of the other six. Now Jesus Himself had taught that, when a man and woman were married, it was God that joined them together, and made them one; and that whilst both were living they were always husband and wife. At the resurrection, when God recalled the dead to life, both would be living; and therefore husband and wife: wherefore each of the seven at the resurrection would be the woman's true husband, and she his true wife. The law of God, however, is unchangeable; and a woman can have only one husband at a time. For Him to give her to any one of them, He must either unmarry the other six, or else make her and the chosen brother commit adultery. In either case God would be breaking His own laws; which is impossible: therefore there is no resurrection of the dead.

Their whole argument was based upon the resurrection doctrine of the day, that the conditions of life in the next world would be the same as in this; and Jesus met the difficulty they had raised by setting them right about that doctrine. The two worlds, He told them, are different. In this world people die, and therefore have to marry to continue the life of the race: in that world there is no death, and therefore no need for marriage. Those accounted worthy to have a place in the world to come, and in the resurrection

life, will die no more: they will be like the angels; and, being sons of that resurrection which those Sadducees denied, will be declared thereby to be sons of God.

The second part of His answer had to do with what Josephus tells us was also a doctrine of the Sadducees; namely, that the soul dies with the body. They held that when a person died, he ceased altogether to exist. Every part of him, seen or unseen, was equally lifeless. The earthly life, and the being who had lived it, had passed away for ever: so that a resurrection, if there were such a thing, would be a new creation; the calling into existence of a totally different being, living another kind of life.

This error Jesus swept away by reasoning from Scripture which His hearers accepted, and showing from it that the soul, the person's real self, that which dwells in the human body, does not die with the body. Separated, it sleeps, as far as this world is concerned; and the resurrection is but the arousing of it from its slumbers. That this is so, and that the so-called dead are merely awakened at the resurrection, and not re-created as the Sadducees' teaching would require, was made known by Moses, in his account of what took place at the Bush, when he spoke of the Lord as Abraham's God, and Isaac's God, and Jacob's God; that is, as the One Whom Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, men long since dead, still had for their God. He is not the dead's God, but the living's for all to whom He is God live unto Him; that is, are having Him as the beginning and end of all they are and do, and are seeking to please and obey Him. Therefore since all the so-called dead, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, have Him for their God, they are still living beings.

In this chapter upon Jesus as the Judge, the chief place amongst those who attacked Him has been given to the scribes, the judges and correctors of Israel, who included in their numbers both Sadducees and Pharisees. Now that He had so silenced those Sadducees that they durst not ask

Him any more questions, some of the scribes, most likely Pharisees, applauded Him, saying, "Teacher, thou hast well said"; and these are they whom the evangelist has used to show how Jesus, as the Baptizer with fire, dealt with people who professed to agree with His teaching.

The kind of error now being illustrated is that which goes by the name of heresy: the picking out of parts of the Scripture and building upon them without taking into account other parts which also bear upon the subject, so that the interpretation makes one part of the word of God clash with another. The case chosen by the evangelist showed Jesus still dealing with something vital to the spread of the Church, something about which its leaders must be purged from all error, if it is to fulfil its mission and conquer the world: His own twofold nature.

The leaders of the people at that time, giving heed only to texts which bore upon the human nature of the Christ, viewed Him as being merely the Son of David according to the flesh. That interpretation of the Scripture Jesus overthrew by reminding them of a neglected text, and making them take it also into account; "David therefore calleth Him Lord, how is He his son?" It is plain that those of them who took it into account would have been silenced at once in their wrong teaching; for it would have brought them face to face with the fact of His twofold nature; that He is God as well as Man.

Such was the example of Jesus which upheld what Theophilus had been taught about baptizing with fire: that the way to free the Church from the half-truths of ignorant teachers was to show in what they were lacking; the way to sweep away error was to proclaim the truth.



## b. 5.

## WALKING MEEKLY

*Beginning.* vii. 28. I say unto you, Among them that are born of woman there is none greater than John : yet he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

*Continuation.* xx. 45-47. Warnings drawn from the scribes.

This last section deals as usual with the way in which they were to bear themselves towards those amongst whom they were to labour; those over whom they were to act as judges for Jesus, answering hard questions, correcting errors, and leading into the truth. It deals first of all with the general behaviour of Envoys in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God; representatives of Him Who came to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

Their position, as already pointed out was to be that of angels; men on whom God's name would be, who would be sent by Him to furnish thoroughly the way of His people. The temptation for such men to exalt themselves in the eyes of the people would be very great. Even the lowest office in the kingdom of God made the person holding it greater than John the Baptist, the greatest of those born of women; and their office was to be the highest in that kingdom. Hence these instructions, given in the hearing of all the people; so that God's people might know what they ought to expect of those whom He would choose to fill so high a place, and in what kind of conduct they were not to uphold them.

Using the scribes as an object lesson, Jesus guarded His pupils against temptations which would beset them in the office for which He was training them, by drawing their attention, first of all, to the long robes in which scribes chose to walk. Clad in those long robes they felt sure that they could not possibly be passed by unnoticed, or be taken for common people; but that, wherever they went, none could

fail to see and know that they were scribes. Such marks of distinction Christ's Envoys were not to desire.

The next thing which He pointed out in the scribes was their love of being treated as if they were the first in the land. They loved greetings in the marketplaces, the chief seats in synagogues, and the chief places at feasts. Wherever regard was paid to rank, whether in public places, in churches, or at social gatherings, there they loved to be recognized as holding the first place. And the people learned that Envoys who loved to have the pre-eminence were not approved of by their Master.

But there was something which received greater condemnation still; and that was the misuse of their office. For this He still used the scribes against whom the parable of the husbandmen had chiefly been spoken; but now He made their doings apply to the teaching He had just been showing His pupils how to give—that which had to do with baptizing with fire. They devoured widows' houses. Acting as their guardians and guides, they took advantage of the widows' trustfulness and helplessness, and gained possession of their goods by getting them to accept and follow what they told them to do. A position like that of Envoys, the guardians and guides of Christ's people, would give many opportunities for gathering in wealth for themselves by working upon the religious feelings of those under their care: as, for instance, in the case of those mourning their dead, by their teaching about the land of everlasting life, where people would be for ever with those whom they had known and loved in Christ on earth, and by what they declared necessary for partaking in the resurrection of the just. Against all doings covered by the expression, "devouring widows' houses" the future Envoys were warned in the hearing of all the people.

As baptizers with fire, destroyers of error, they would be the great authorities upon the truth; but their work would

have to be done, not to exalt themselves by reminding people that they were Envoys of the Lord, but solely to destroy error and make the truth recognized. They would have to be in close touch with sacred things, in close communion with God; but they were not to make use of that fact to gain the respect and regard of the people. They would have to pray, and often make long prayers; but not as the scribes did for show, to make others think that they were in communion with God, and that, as His chosen ones, they were walking in His presence.

Vanity, love of pre-eminence in their dealings with His people, the Lord condemned in His Envoys; but above all He condemned their turning their work to their own advantage by preying upon the helpless, and deluding the devout.

*c.*

JUDGING

xxi. 1-4. The widow's mites.

The evangelist has closed the chapter with one of those private lessons given to the twelve as friends of Jesus, as men who were being shown the inner working of His ways: a lesson upon judging, showing how Christ's Envoys were to appraise gifts made to God.

It was no longer upon the scribes that their eyes were being fixed. Following the gaze of Jesus as He looked up, they saw people casting their gifts into the treasury; gifts for the support of the temple, for the glory of God. The people were rich, and their gifts large. And there came also a poor widow, whose offering of two mites was the very smallest that it was lawful to make in that place. Upon that scene Jesus delivered His judgment.

The usual way of valuing such gifts is to judge them by their purchasing power in the market; and to regard a large giver as having made a large offering to God, and a small giver, a small one. That error Jesus freed them from by

showing them the right way of valuing gifts made to God. According to His ruling it is by the cost to the giver, by what the person has to undergo to make the gift, that they are to be judged. A tiny sum drawn from people's necessities is more in God's eyes than the largest gift drawn from their superfluities. What costs little to give is of little value as a gift to God.

## CHAPTER R.

ST. LUKE XXI. 5.—36.

(a). 5-7. (b). 8-33. (c). 34-36.

(a).

5-7. And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and offerings, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in which there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And they asked him, saying, Teacher, when therefore shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when these things are about to come to pass?

(b). 1.

8, 9. And he said, Take heed that ye be not led astray: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am he; and, The time is at hand: go ye not after them.

And when ye shall hear of wars and tumults, be not terrified: for these things must needs come to pass first; but the end is not immediately.

2.

10-19. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be great earthquakes, and in divers places famines and pestilences; and there shall be terrors and great signs from heaven.

But before all these things, they shall lay their hands on you, and shall persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for my name's sake. It shall turn unto you for a testimony. Settle it, therefore, in your hearts, not to meditate beforehand how to answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to withstand or to gainsay. But ye shall be delivered up

even by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. And not a hair of your head shall perish. In your patience ye shall win your souls.

## 3.

20-24. But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand. Then let them that are in Judæa flee unto the mountains; and let them that are in the midst of her depart out; and let not them that are in the country enter therein. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress upon the land, and wrath unto this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations.

And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

## 4.

25-28. And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh.

## 5.

29-33. And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees: when they now shoot forth, ye see it and know of your own selves that the summer is now nigh. Even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

(c).

34-36. But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare: for it shall come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth. But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

## CHAPTER R. XXI. 5-36.

### INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT THE PLAN OF GOD

a. xxi. 5-7. b. 8-33. c. 34-36.

*Gabriel.* i. 32. The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David.

*John.* iii. 17. Whose fan is in His hand, thoroughly to cleanse His threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire.

a.

xxi. 5-7. *Introduction.* When the twelve were about to set out with Jesus on His journey to Jerusalem, and He told them about the fulfilment of the plan of God which had been made known through the prophets, we are told that "they perceived not the things that were said." That was the third of the statements which the evangelist made about them; and, in keeping with it, he has made this third chapter an outline of the instruction that Jesus gave them to guide them in understanding the plan of God.

In the scene which he has made the starting-point of his outline, the twelve are shown with the temple before them, in all its greatness and glory, and Jesus teaching them by means of it. Knowing our Lord's parabolic way of dealing with things, it is not hard to see how the temple would be used by Him for teaching about the Church which He was founding. The stones with which it was built would be the people of whom His Church would be built: the goodly stones, beautiful and noble lives: the votive offerings, lives



devoted to God and the Church; lives such as those of the Envoys themselves and the rest of His servants. It was with the goodly stones and offerings, about which some had spoken, that His teaching that day had more particularly to do. Of them, in common with the rest of the building, He said, "As for these things at which ye are gazing, the days will come, in which there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

They would have known what John had foretold about His fan being in His hand, and would have understood that when He pictured those stones as being scattered so thoroughly around the temple site that not one of them was resting upon another, but were all separate, and each in a position to be judged by itself, He was picturing His threshing-floor being thoroughly purged, its contents all tossed and scattered by His fan: so they asked Him, "Teacher, when therefore shall these things be?" and, "What shall be the sign when these things are about to come to pass?"

It was the filling in of another part of the portrait of the Prophet like unto Moses that the twelve were seeing. The position which Moses had held was given him by God; and what he had done as head of the people was done, not of himself, but in obedience to the plan of God, according to the directions and revelations which God had given him. In like manner, it was the Lord God Who had given to Jesus the throne of His father David; and it was in accordance with the plan of God that He organized and taught the people. The doing of his work had brought Moses into conflict with the first of the people; and, as shown in the preceding chapter, Jesus, in doing His work, met with the same resistance. At the close of his career, Moses had gathered together heads of tribes and other leading men, and unfolded to them the plan of God about their future, and warned them against evil: and now, at the close of His earthly career, Jesus was unfolding to His Envoys the plan

of God about their future and that of the Church of which they were to be the heads, and warning them against giving way to evil.

It was a vision of the end of a stage in the plan of God that they were being shown: the levelling of the building which had risen under the old covenant; the sorting out of its stones, as if to see which would be fit for use in the next stage, and which would be rejected. Under the new covenant, the Envoys would be the master-builders, to build according to the plan of God; and, in like manner, they and their work would be tested to see if fit for the great temple of God in heaven.

Their fitness to act as builders would depend upon the judgment of the great Master-BUILDER; Whose way of judging, as shown by His verdict upon the offerings cast into the treasury, is not that of man. The test of fitness which He set up, and the kind of training that He gave the twelve for doing this part of their work, are outlined in this chapter by quotations from His answers to their two questions about the down-throwing and scattering of the temple stones, and the sifting of the Church which it represented.

The arrangement of the chapter is the same as that of the foregoing chapters upon their training.

*Summary.* The first thing dealt with was their curiosity about the time when those events would take place; and they learned that Envoys of Christ were to be men who would not be misled by any one claiming to be a God-sent leader, or announcing that the end of the world, the time for the final separation of the wheat and the chaff, had come; men who would not be dismayed by hearing of wars and tumults.

With regard to the events themselves, the disturbances caused by the fan, the great test from them would lie in the way in which their trials were borne; in the trust they had in God; in their patience.

The character in which Jesus was to be served by them

was displayed to them when, as the Prophet, He answered their question about the signs; unfolding to them the working of the plan of God in the judgment that would come on the unheeding; making it known in pity, tenderness, and love; warning and shielding.

What they would have to teach the people for Him had to do with the Second Coming, and its terrible signs; but it was to be taught as by men to whom they would be things of joy, tokens of the coming to them of the acceptable year of the Lord.

Finally their bearing, when speaking for the Prophet, had to be that of children of wisdom; able to read the signs which Jesus had given them, and absolutely certain of the coming to pass of all that He had foretold.

The chapter closes with some of the personal warnings given them, as servants of God, to keep them prepared for the coming of that great day of the Lord.

#### b. 1.

##### KNOWING THE TIME

*Beginning.* vii. 29. And all the people when they heard, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

*Continuation.* xxi. 8, 9. Warnings.

The instruction recorded was given to the twelve as to men who would be in charge of the threshing-floor of Christ, and yet themselves form part of its contents.

On a threshing-floor wheat and chaff lie mingled together. In the Church the good and the bad, the useful and the useless, would also be mingled together; but, in many cases, without the marked difference that there is between wheat and chaff. How would the wheat be known, the kind of person the Lord would choose for His garner?

With regard to people generally, Theophilus had already been told how they would be known to be amongst those whom God would gather in. People who justified God by

accepting His plan of salvation, and following His way, were wheat: such, for instance, as those who heard, and the publicans; people who had begun their heavenward journey as God had appointed by being baptized with the baptism of John. About the leaders however, he had not yet been told; though, of course, it would have been plain that, as leaders, their fitness to be amongst the wheat that Jesus garnered would have been known by the way in which they acted as leaders of His people. A leader faithful and true, would lead his people unerringly along the path that God had marked out, calm and stedfast to the end; and it was to make them unswerving leaders of that type that Jesus gave them such warnings as those about which the evangelist told Theophilus.

First, He guarded them against being drawn aside from the right way, and led wandering about by men who came as special messengers of His. Many would come claiming to speak and act in His name, and giving out that they had come with His authority to sweep away abuses, to restore the people to the right way, or to do some other great work for the Church; and, what with their work and their claim, would tempt even Envoys of Christ to believe that His name was indeed upon them, and that they were true messengers of God, and had to be treated like the messenger of Ex. 23:20, 21. Others, professing the same divine commission, would declare that the time was at hand for the Son of man to come and cast the bad and the worthless out of His kingdom, and lead His people into their heritage; and they would upset the hearts and lives of people by fear and awe of the nearness of the end. But His command to His Envoys was, "Go ye not after them." They were worthless leaders; chaff upon the threshing-floor. With such, the true servants of God would have nothing to do.

The end, however, had always to be in the minds of the leaders of God's people; for we find that a mark of their fitness to be amongst those true leaders whom He would

gather as wheat into His garner was the way in which they were affected by signs of the end.

One great test would come to them from wars and tumults: not the wars and tumults which were unceasingly going on in the heathen world; nor even those, called persecutions, which would be waged against them: but, like those which soon afterwards arose amongst the ancient people of God before the destruction of the temple, wars and tumults in which Christian peoples themselves would take sides: strife between members of the same kingdom. Well might leaders be terrified and dismayed; and, thinking that it was their bad leadership that had brought these things to pass, be tempted to depart from the way they had been following, lest the Master should come and find all in confusion. But true Envoys of Christ would not be discouraged. Such things were bound to happen on the threshing-floor of Christ where the good and the bad were mingled together. They had a part in the things which had to take place before His coming; but only a part. They were not the final preparation. "The end is not at once."

Thus much were they told in direct answer to their question about the time when those things would take place.

## b. 2.

### CLEAVING TO THE PLAN OF GOD

*Beginning.* vii. 30. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, being not baptized of him.

*Continuation.* xxi. 10-19. The coming trials.

There was something more, however, which the twelve were told about the time when that scattering of the temple stones, and the great testing of the Church of Christ which it pictured, would take place. What they were told had to do with what John the Baptist had said about Jesus; about His fan being in His hand, thoroughly to cleanse His threshing-floor. All John's hearers would know that it was by

means of a fan that the wheat and chaff on a threshing-floor were tossed and scattered, so that the winds of heaven could find the chaff, and carry it away for the burning; and that, when he spoke of the fan of Christ, he was referring to the means which Christ would use to shake and part asunder the people who formed His kingdom here on earth, and mark out the worthless for judgment. The fan of Christ is never really still; for in the Church the good and the bad are always to be found; and purging of the threshing-floor has to go on unceasingly: but towards the end, a last great separation will be begun, the thorough purging of the floor; and it was of that time that the twelve were seeking to know. In keeping with the prominence given in the introduction to the goodly stones and offerings, most of what is said about the fan of Christ is about it as it would be used upon the twelve themselves, and therefore upon the order of Envoys of which they formed the beginning.

In telling Theophilus about this, the evangelist began with war—the clash of race with race, and of government with government; the rising of nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom—the great testing time of humanity. Tossed and shaken out of their ordinary ways of life, out of their habits and customs, without the usual checks upon their animal nature, people would show plainly what they really were; how much, or how little of the kingdom of God was in them; how much of the spirit of self-sacrifice, of love for others. They would show it by their reasons for going to war; by the side which they took in it; by the way in which they waged it. And the chaff would be those who failed to take their stand for the right; who failed to shield the weak; who refused to risk their own lives that others might live in peace and safety.

But it was not only human beings that Jesus would use as His fan. There were also convulsions of nature, as they are called; earthquakes, famines, pestilences: things which would also throw people out of their regular course of life,

and test and prove them. It is not hard to see how such happenings would affect the wheat and the chaff; those who trusted in God, and those who did not; those who were truly His, and those who were not: and how they would bring to light the kindly self-sacrifice, the Christ-like nature, the unselfishness in rescuing, helping, cheering, in laying down their lives for others.

And last of all, He would use as His fan "terrors, and great signs from heaven"—spiritual upheavals, warnings, and awakenings; testing souls as to their genuineness, their faith, their hold on Christ.

These were all on what may be called a large scale, tests of the highest degree: but the purging of the threshing-floor is ever going on by means of the same three on a smaller scale, and in a less degree; by the clash of human beings in the march of life; by disaster, want and sickness; and by the shakings of the spiritual life; testing, trying, marking out the wheat from the chaff. Like as it was with the Pharisees and lawyers, the great test would be following the plan of God: the chaff being those who, instead of humbly accepting His decree and doing what He has laid down as being the right and true way, follow their own ways, and go by their own views of what is right and good for people to do.

Such would be the testing of people generally; but those whom Jesus was training for Envoys learned that their own special sifting would come first. Being leaders of the people, the brunt of the attacks upon the Church would fall on them; and one great aim of those attacks would be to destroy their leadership. Through the trials that would come upon them they would be tested: and those attacks would be for them the fan of Christ marking out among them the good and bad. The attacks made upon them would be many and various. They would be seized upon; they would be driven away; they would be treated as false teachers; they would be treated as evil doers. At times

violence would be tried; at times the law. Seized upon, they would be handed over to the "synagogues," ecclesiastical courts, as being false to the popular views of religion and of God's plan for the Church; or they would be cast into prisons as wrong doers. As being leaders of the people, men upon whom was the name of God, they would be brought before kings and governors, charged with usurping their place and authority. All this, they learned, would turn out to be a proving of their fitness for the leadership of God's people. What they would have to do to be approved of by Christ was to have such a deep, full trust in Him Whose name they bore, that they would not even meditate beforehand upon how they should answer the charges brought against them; being sure that He would give them a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries would be unable to gainsay, or to withstand.

But it was not only the civil power that would be against them for leading the people in Christ's name. Would they but give up their great claim, all would be well; but so long as they were true to their commission from Christ, even natural affections would turn against them. They would be given up by all those to whom a man in his time of trial should be able to look for aid: by parents and brethren, kinsfolk and friends, who would even cause some of them to be put to death. Because of the name in which they acted, they would be hated by all men. But whether they lived, or whether they died, true leaders for Christ would be found safe amongst those whom He garnered; so fully, so perfectly safe, that, as He put it, not a hair of their heads would perish. And the way in which they would gain their lives—not the earthly ones, marred or destroyed by their foes, but lives imperishable with Him in heaven amongst His garnered wheat—would be by their endurance, by their being faithful unto death.



## b. 3.

## SPEAKING FOR THE PROPHET

*Beginning.* vii. 31, 32. Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like unto children that sit in the marketplace, and call one to another; which say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not weep.

*Continuation.* xxi. 20-24. The sign of Jerusalem.

The second question which they had asked Him was about the sign when those things would be about to come to pass. None but a prophet to whom God had revealed it could know about such signs, and be able to tell people about them; for they belong to the plan of God, the foreknowledge of which can come from Him alone: and it is as the Prophet that Jesus is shown answering them here; the Prophet, about to depart, declaring to them the plan of God, so that they might declare it for Him to His people. In other words, Theophilus was being shown Jesus in the character in which they were to speak for Him, and enlighten and help the people.

The sign about which He told them was the sign of Jerusalem. There were two parts to that sign; the first, temporary; the other, lasting. He began with the temporary part, Jerusalem surrounded by camps. When they saw that sight, they would know that her desolation was at hand; and that as God had done to Shiloh, so He was about to do to the house whereon His name was called and wherein they trusted, and to the place which He had given them and their fathers. (Jer. 7:14.) It was a sign that the vengeance spoken of in Deut. 18:19 was coming upon those who would not listen to the Prophet like unto Moses; those who, instead of acting like men, were always turning, like petulant children, against what they were wanted to do. People of that type would perish. Those who listened to the Prophet

would be saved; for He told them both when to escape, and where to take refuge.

To the ordinary onlooker the fate of Jerusalem would have been but the natural result of following the lead of men of the Pharisee and lawyer type, men whom Jesus had likened to cross-grained children; but to Envoys of Christ the destruction of the city and the scattering of the people would be an example of His fan at work, testing and trying His people and preparing them for the great day when He would separate the wheat from the chaff. Awful indeed would be the doings when His fan would shake the contents of His threshing-floor. So dreadful would they be, that, in this example which He prophetically set before their eyes, His pity was upon those to whom the upbringing of the race belonged. They would be rearing them for misery, because of the great distress that would be upon the earth, and the wrath that would be upon that people. They would fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations.

Then came the part of the sign which was to be the Envoys' guidance and help during their long waiting for the working of the fan of Christ to cease, and the upheaving, shaking, and breaking-up of the nations on His threshing-floor to come to an end. That sign was Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles. Wars and tumults would arise and cease; but the times of the Gentiles' testing would not be over, and that part of the purging of the threshing-floor ended, until Jerusalem had ceased altogether to be trodden down by the foreigner, and had once more become the free home of the ancient people of God. That would only come to pass, and the final winnowing take place, after the whole of the Gentile nations in the Church of Christ had been storm-tossed by His fan, and violently shaken by wars and tumults.

## b. 4.

## KNOWING ABOUT THE SECOND COMING

*Beginning.* vii. 33, 34. For John the Baptist is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.

*Continuation.* xxi. 25-28. The signs of the end.

The leadership of the Envoys was to go on till the end of time: so the instruction given to the twelve was not merely for that age, but for all time; till the Son of man came from heaven, and separated for ever the bad from the good in that great winnowing of His threshing-floor when the chaff would all be swept away as by the air of heaven. It was with the signs that would go before that time that their instruction now dealt; and what they were being taught by Jesus the people were to be taught by them.

Again we meet with what has been noticed before; that when anything very strange and wonderful is being foretold, something that can be readily tried and proved is connected with it, so that faith in the unseen might be upheld. Thus with the signs of the last day there was also given the sign, already mentioned, of Jerusalem—its siege, and long down-treading by the Gentiles—to assure people of the coming of those great and terrible signs which will usher in the final winnowing of the threshing-floor of Christ.

The separation of the wheat and chaff will always be going on, because the separating force will always be at work. In the case noted by the evangelist in the early part of the treatise, it acted through the way which God had chosen for the leading of His people; those who formed the worthless chaff being marked out and separated by their dissatisfaction with the humble God-sent leader, and even with the Son of man Himself. John the Baptist, with his call to repentance, his fasting and self-discipline, separated some:

the Son of man, coming into the everyday life of man, joining in its innocent pleasures, "eating and drinking," and befriending publicans and sinners, separated others. It was, however, about the last day that the twelve were now being told; that awful time when, like the up-tossed chaff, all the rejected will be finally swept away, and only God's chosen ones be left.

Terrible, they were told, would be the signs that the winnowing of the chaff was near. Above them, in the sun, moon, and stars those bodies which had been given to men for signs and seasons, days and years, would be seen signs of that coming of the day of the Lord spoken of by the prophets; the coming of His judgment upon those whom He would root out of His kingdom. On the earth there would be distress of nations in perplexity about the roaring of the sea and its surging, as if about to be let loose by the justice of God and sweep all living things away. No longer would men stand in the pride of their strength rejecting the plan of God; they would be fainting on all sides for fear, and for the expectation of the things which were coming upon the world. The old order of things was passing away. Everything in which they had trusted as being unchangeable had begun to fail them: for the powers of heaven were shaken.

The vision closed with the sight of the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory; coming to part for ever the evil from the good; coming to gather the wheat into His garner, and burn up the chaff with fire unquenchable.

Thus far were revealed to them the signs of the end of all things. There still remained their personal instruction as Envoys of Christ, men upon whose shoulders would be laid the task of leading God's people heavenward. Trials and troubles would be theirs as well; a testing and a sifting: for upon them would come all the worries and the cares which fall to the lot of those who act for "The despised and rejected of men"; but the signs of the end, which to the chaff

of the threshing-floor would bring fear and distress, to them would bring happiness and hope. For to them those things would be a sign that their release was at hand; their release from the burden of their office with its responsibilities and cares, its anxieties and toils; release from the attacks and resistance of the disobedient. The time of patient endurance would be drawing to a close. No longer would they walk with downcast eye and bowed head, the signs of the meekness wherewith victims of oppression bear and endure; but with the bearing and joy of messengers of Christ, guardians and leaders of His flock, about to give into His hands their treasured care, to lay down at His feet their authority and power, and be free from the burden of office: for to them the acceptable year of the Lord would have come.

b. 5.

READING THE SIGNS

*Beginning.* vii. 35. Wisdom is justified of all her children.

*Continuation.* xxi. 29-33. Reading the signs.

The things which Jesus had been telling them must have sounded very strange and unnatural to them as they stood there in the freshness of the spring-time, with Jerusalem still standing, and the huge stones of the temple, emblems of lastingness, before them. And their faith would be tried more sorely still when year after year went by and they saw no signs of the coming end: so Jesus, knowing that they would need something to strengthen them during their long drawn out waiting, and enable them to go on speaking to the people with the certainty of conviction, spoke to them as to children of wisdom, able to pass from the known to the unknown, and told them a parable taken from the budding of the trees around them.

Two sets of signs had been given them: the single sign of Jerusalem, which would show itself first; and the many in the heavens and the earth, in nature and men, which would

begin to appear later on, before the coming of the Son of man with power and great glory. In like manner, in the parable two sets of trees were pointed out to them; first the early-budding fig tree, and then all the other trees. For a long time those trees had been bare, and had shown no signs whatever: but now they were beginning to shoot out, and the pupils of Jesus seeing it knew of themselves that summer was nigh at hand; the season when the fruit, by which each tree is known, would show itself. Why they were so sure about it was because it was part of the course of nature, the course which God had decreed should take place; and they had never known it fail. So when they saw those signs coming to pass about which He had told them, they would know that the kingdom of God was nigh at hand, coming as He had decreed that it should come, and in the fulness of its perfection. There was a space of time between the shooting forth of the fig tree and of the rest of the trees; and also between those signs and the coming of the summer: and there would be a space of time, according to the measure of God, between the sign of the siege of Jerusalem and the rest of the signs; as well as between them and the coming of God's kingdom, when Jesus would take the power and reign over His chosen ones, the wheat gathered into His garner.

Then Theophilus was told how Jesus confirmed all that He had been telling them about the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, and the sea; and, to keep His servants' faith in His word sure and stedfast during the long ages of waiting, gave them a sign which would be ever before their eyes and those of their successors. "Verily I say unto you, This race shall not pass away till all things be accomplished":—the race marked with those failings which were to bring about the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. The reference was to Jer. 38: 35, 36 Sep. Ver.: "Thus saith the Lord, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the moon and the stars for a light by night, and makes a noise in the sea,

and the waves thereof boom; the Lord Almighty is His name: if these ordinances cease from before Me, saith the Lord, then shall the race of Israel cease to be a nation before Me for ever." Though scattered amongst all the races of the earth, Israel would remain unabsorbed, a distinct race. Crushed to the dust, with every man's hand against it, it would revive in spite of all; would grow and spread, an indestructible race: a standing witness which will not cease till all things have come to pass which Jesus foretold.

Then came His own solemn assurance; the pledging of His word. Heaven and earth, on the sureness of whose continuance all plans and ways of life depend; heaven and earth, all things created, will pass away, but the words of Jesus will never pass away. And according to their faith in their Lord, so would their belief in the certainty of His predictions be.

### C.

#### PERSONAL WARNINGS

##### xxi. 34-36. Warnings.

The instruction about the last day had been given them in their official capacity, as men who were to be leaders of the people of God; but now they were told plainly that they themselves had to be as fully prepared for it as any of the people who were under them: for that day would come upon all them that dwelt on the face of all the earth; upon leaders and led alike. And the terrible part of it was the way in which it would come upon men. Like as animals, that have sated their appetites, and settled down sleepy and unsuspecting upon the earth, see the net of the hunter suddenly shoot over them, and find themselves trapped, helpless and doomed; so would the unprepared find themselves. Wherefore the Envoys of Christ were warned to take heed to themselves, lest anything should keep them from being ready; lest they should be weighed down with that dulness and dis-

like of spiritual things which comes from over-indulgence in eating; or else weighed down with the effects of strong drink; or with the cares of life.

The temptation would be for them, with the knowledge which Jesus had given them, to put off getting ready for His coming until the signs about which He had told them had begun to come to pass. To guard against that they were to watch and make supplications at every season, so that they might escape all the things which would come to pass; and, instead of being swept away like the chaff, stand before the Son of man, wheat, chosen and treasured, which He was gathering into His garner.



## CHAPTER S.

ST. LUKE XXI. 37.—XXII. 65.

(a). xxi. 37.—xxi. 6. (b). xxii. 7-53. (c). 54-65.

(a).

xxi. 37.-xxii. 6. And every day he was teaching in the temple; and every night he went out, and lodged in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.

And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, to hear him; and the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might put him to death; for they feared the people. And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went away, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might deliver him unto them. And they were glad and covenanted to give him money. And he consented.

And he sought opportunity to deliver him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

(b). 1.

7-13. And the day of unleavened bread came, on which the passover must be sacrificed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and make ready for us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we make ready? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house whereinto he goeth. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Teacher saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

## 2.

14-34. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave to them, saying, This is my body. But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. For the Son of man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined: but woe unto that man through whom he is betrayed.

And they began to question among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing. And there also arose a contention among them, which of them is accounted to be greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them; and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am in the midst of you as he that serveth. But ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not: and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

## 3.

35-38. And he said unto them, When I sent you forth without purse, and wallet, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. And he said unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a wallet: and he that hath none, let him sell his cloke, and buy a sword. For I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in me, And he was reckoned with transgressors: for that which concerneth me hath fulfilment. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

## 4.

39-46. And he came out, and went, as his custom was, unto the mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

And he was parted from them about a stone's cast; and he kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.

And when he rose up from his prayer, he came unto the disciples, and found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

## 5.

47-53. While he yet spake, behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them; and he drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

And when they that were about him saw what would follow, they said, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And a certain one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

And Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and elders, which were coming against him, Are ye come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves? When I was daily with

you in the temple, ye stretched not forth your hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

(c). 1.

54-62. And they seized him, and led him away, and brought him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the court, and had sat down together, Peter sat in the midst of them. And a certain maid seeing him as he sat in the light of the fire, and looking stedfastly upon him, said, This man also was with him. But he denied, saying, Woman, I know him not. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou also art one of them. But Peter said, Man, I am not. And after the space of about one hour another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this man also was with him: for he is a Galilæan. But Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said unto him, Before the cock crow this day, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

2.

63-65. And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and beat him. And they blindfolded him, and asked him, saying, Prophecy: who is he that struck thee? And many other things spake they against him, reviling him.

## CHAPTER S. XXI. 37.—XXII. 65.

### REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHRIST

a. xxi. 37.—xxii. 6. b. xxii. 7.—53. c. xxii. 54—65.

*Gabriel.* i. 33. He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.

*John.* iii. 18-20. With many other exhortations therefore preached he good tidings unto the people; but Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother's wife, and for all the evil things which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

xxi. 37.-xxii. 6. *Introduction.* At this point the description of the Christ which the evangelist has been following—that given in the first chapter of the treatise—suddenly changes. The good news with which John comforted the people would have been about the doings of Him of Whose kingdom he had just been telling them; but the main part of the record is now about John himself, the messenger of God. What is told about him is divided into two parts; one of which speaks of the many things with which he comforted the people, and the other of his war with evil and evil-doers, and what he had to undergo in that war. In like manner this chapter tells about messengers of Christ; how they are to give comfort to God's people, and how they too are to war with evil, and will suffer in so doing. But all through the chapter Jesus is made the great central Figure. Everything that is said about the Envoys is bound up with Him; and all through He acts as the King Whom Gabriel described as reigning over the house of Jacob for ever. Seeing that the

children of Jacob were God's "chosen ones," the house of Jacob would be His chosen people, those whom He calls to Himself through Jesus.

The chapter is a continuation of the second chapter of the treatise; only the teaching is now no longer in the synagogues, but in the temple. Satan, who had departed from Him until a season, has now returned; but instead of the wilderness being the scene of conflict with the powers of darkness, there is the nightly lodging in the mount of Olives. The second chapter described Jesus as the Christ commissioned by God to rule and provide for His people, with the sole authority and power to do that divinely-given work; this one adds to that portrait by presenting Him as the Centre and Source of all authority and power in the kingdom of God.

The crown of the work which He had claimed as His own in the synagogue at Nazareth was to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord; work which required for its carrying out the giving of authority and power to the servants of the kingdom of God to do all that had to be done in connection with that year. The proclamation of the year of jubilee, which prefigured it, was made on the day of atonement; wherefore Jesus, for setting in motion the proclamation of the acceptable year, chose the great Day of Atonement itself, the day upon which He, the Lamb of God, was to be offered. The second chapter showed Him setting out to do that work; the present chapter shows Him commissioning men to go on doing it for Him: thereby furnishing Theophilus with the assurance he required for what he had been taught about the government of the Church; about the commission of the Envoys, and their right to hold a certain position in the Church and to do certain things.

Like Baptism and Confirmation, the Ordinations by which Jesus replaced the several parts of His own Ordination were to be administered by men. The worth of any ordination depends upon the right of the ordainer to ordain;

a right which, in Christ's kingdom, can only come from Him; either from Himself personally, or else through men to whom He has committed it to give for Him. This means that for the claim to be fully established that a person has received an Envoy's Ordination through man, the ordainer's right to ordain would have to be traced back through an unbroken series of ordainers to Christ; a chain of evidence which of necessity leads to the men to whom He Himself had committed it. A claim to have received an Envoy's Ordination straight from the unseen Lord, and not through man at all, would have to be upheld in the same way as that in which He established His own unwitnessed Ordination; "by signs and wonders, and mighty works." The Ordination of the apostles was really an unwitnessed Ordination; for none outside the band itself were present: and it was because they were there alone with Jesus whilst He was commissioning them, that "the signs of an apostle" became necessary for fully convincing the Church at large of their Christ-given position, authority, and power.

The main features of the chapter are touched upon as usual in the short introduction. Jesus was once more teaching; but not in the synagogues, as He had done when He returned with power and proved Himself to be the Christ. It was in the temple, the great gathering-place of the people of God, that He was teaching, and finishing the work which He had begun directly after the temptations in the wilderness. Not that those who carried on that work for Him could do it by merely teaching. They had also to go on waging His great war with evil; bearing the brunt of the attacks of the devil, and overcoming them as He had done. So the evangelist pictured Him, not only as teaching in the daytime in the temple, but as lying out at night on the mount of Olives; thus recalling His dark sojourn in the wilderness, and His combats there with the devil. In those times of trial "the people" had no part; for it was early in the morning when they came to the temple to listen to the Victor, and be

guided on the way of life: but those who carried on the work of Christ the King would have to share in them, and share so deeply, that we find the three great temptations in the wilderness all connected with what was given them to do.

The time which our Lord chose for commissioning the twelve was when they were gathered together to eat "the Passover." There were two feasts which went by that name: the one to which the name strictly belonged, the Passover itself as described in the Old Testament; and that which was otherwise known as the feast of unleavened bread.

The Passover proper could only be celebrated at Jerusalem, where the temple was. In times of peace people flocked to that city from all parts of the known world in large numbers; but, many as they were, they would have been few compared with all those who could not come. During the centuries of tumult and disorder long spaces of time must have passed without the scattered people having any chance whatever of sharing in that feast; and it is evident that unless some way had been found for upholding it in the place that it was meant to have in the nation's life, the feast, with its far-reaching effects, would have ceased to exist for the vast body of the race. Of all the Jewish feasts, none was so great, so race-binding, so race-uplifting as the Passover. It carried them back to the time when they had broken free from the bondage of Egypt and set forth as God's chosen people: it revived hopes of their deliverance from their present bondage, and also of the glorious future, for which they yearned: and knitting together the past, the present, and the future, sent them forth strengthened and heartened on their pilgrimage of life. To keep the Passover in unceasing remembrance use was made of the feast of unleavened bread, which, strictly speaking, began on the day after the Passover, and lasted only six days; but unleavened bread having also to be eaten on the Passover day, it was



regarded as lasting seven days. A day, which would clash with neither of those ordained feasts, was chosen; the day before the true feast of the Passover. On that day, from what we can make out, unleavened bread was eaten, and the whole of the Passover ritual followed; except, of course, the sacrifice, for which something would have been chosen which bore no resemblance whatever to a paschal lamb. Although in time the day took to itself the name of the Passover it was in reality only a feast of unleavened bread. It was this added day which made of the feast of unleavened bread the eight-day feast of which Josephus speaks.

To avoid the risk of any misunderstanding from this twofold use of the name Passover, the evangelist, as a scientific man would do who found that he had to employ an ambiguous term, stated beforehand in which of its meanings he was going to use it. By his note in the introduction he informed Theophilus that, whenever he used that name, he was speaking of the feast of unleavened bread, the Passover of the Dispersion; and not the Passover proper, the "feast of the Jews."

The way in which the mention of this is linked with what goes before seems to show that the daily teaching in the temple bore upon that which the great feast symbolized, the Sacrifice of the Lamb of God; as if preparing for the great march of the people of God.

The Baptist, by his fearless rebuke of vice in high places, had set an example of what Envoys of Christ were to be and do. They, too, when attacking evil, would have to expect opposition from those in power; those whose duty it was to set a good example themselves, and to uphold the right. It was bad enough when a man in Herod's position, a leader and guardian of the people, behaved as he had done; but it was worse still when he used his power to shut up God's messenger in prison. Envoys of Christ, in their war with evil, would find equally bad behaviour amongst the rulers of the people, and would also have to be ready to

suffer as John had done: a fact about which the twelve also learned from the way in which their Lord was treated.

Against Jesus and the work which He was doing there were again arrayed the chief priests and scribes, the leaders of the people. It was against them, as being types of unworthy guardians of God's people, men who use their office for their own profit, that the parable of the husbandmen who kept the fruit of the vineyard for themselves had been spoken. Condemned by Christ, the people had turned against them; whereupon they had shown another sign of unworthy leaders by being afraid of those whom they professed to lead. To do away with everything that He was teaching the people, everything that He was providing for them, and thus make themselves the only ones to whom they could turn for guidance and help, they wanted to destroy Jesus; and sought to do so without danger to themselves. Satan came to their aid; for what they were trying to do was part of the great war between evil and good, between the devil and Christ.

It was the season spoken of in the reference note at the close of the account of the temptations in the wilderness that had come; and Satan had returned for his last desperate attack. His first appearance in the treatise was in connection with Jesus' first coming as the Christ; his last, with the close of Jesus' work as the Christ, as He was preparing for His departure. His attack was not direct as before; but through the followers of Jesus. He began to help the foes of Christ by making a breach in the defence; a breach most dangerous; for he entered into one of those who had been chosen to be leaders of the people of God, Judas one of the twelve.

Judas at once set out as an envoy would: but it was to the foe that he went; to the chief priests and officers who had charge of the temple where the people gathered, and Jesus taught. With them he talked; and their talk was how he might deliver Jesus into their hands. To them he

was a bearer of good tidings; and, although it was as the devil's messenger that he came, his "gospel" brought joy to them. Their talk evidently suggested the best course to be taken, for they concluded to offer him money to carry it out; and the man, who could not keep troth with his Lord, agreed to their terms, and pledged himself to the foe. That was the seal of his downfall from being an Envoy of Christ: his being purchasable. Henceforth he made use of his position in the band to deliver Jesus to His foes in the absence of the multitude. The evangelist does not say in the absence of "the people"; for that name has just been used for the people of God, and it would have been a misuse of the word to make it stand for those who were absent from Christ.

*Summary.* To confirm some of the things Theophilus had been taught about the Envoys' commission, the evangelist showed him Jesus, as the departing Christ, founding the order which was to provide for the people of God, and protect them, when He was gone.

Beginning as usual with the kind of men they were to be, and therefore what people were to account them to be, he showed him first of all Jesus using them as His ministers to prepare for the feast of unleavened bread, like as levites were used in the temple where He was daily teaching: and then how He made them His stewards, and guarded them against the temptations which would go with that office; temptations of Satan such as those He had met in the wilderness, and was nightly meeting on the mount of Olives.

After that he showed him Jesus, as if to provide for the people who came so early to Him in the temple, appointing them overseers of the people's needs; and symbolizing the two parts of the duties of this office, one by a purse and wallet, the other by a sword. The temptations which went with those two parts he dealt with separately. He told him first of the agony of Jesus, to show him how cruel to their

Lord their yielding, like Judas, to the temptations that went with the bearing of the purse and the wallet would be; and told him, too, of the great safeguard, prayer, that was given them. Then by the scene at the betrayal, he showed him what they were taught about the use of the sword when dealing with the foes of their Lord: how no violence was to be used; only gentle pleading, and rebuke.

He closed the chapter with two confirming proofs that the main mover in the attack upon Jesus and His followers is Satan: the first, that which our Lord Himself chose, Peter's denials; the other, the brutality of those who had charge of the Prisoner. Both lying and cruelty are fruits of the devil.

#### b. 1.

#### MINISTERS OF CHRIST

#### xxii. 7-13. Preparing the Passover.

The second chapter of the treatise showed Jesus coming as the Christ with the power of the Spirit to begin His work; this, the next to the last, shows Him, about to depart, arranging for that work to go on by committing it to men to carry on for Him. The time which He chose for doing this was that day of unleavened bread on which the "Passover" had to be sacrificed.

The expression "to sacrifice" was used when speaking of anything whatever offered to God; and only carried with it the idea of killing when the thing offered happened to be a living creature. Whatever it may have been that, before the destruction of Jerusalem, was sacrificed on that day, what took place was not the Old Testament feast of the Passover, but a meal whose doings had for ages kept the scattered race in remembrance of it, and had grown so deeply into their lives, that even when they were able to be at Jerusalem it was observed by them, seemingly as a preparation for the feast towards which in far-off lands

their hearts had turned, the feast on which they had so often fed by faith.

His daily teachings in the temple ended, the Teacher went on to prepare for that memorial feast, and all that it betokened. The account of the finding of the place where it was to be held is very interesting; but the evangelist relates nothing because of its interestingness. Every single thing mentioned in this treatise has its bearing upon instruction which men of the Theophilus class at that time received, and helps to establish something of importance in that instruction; even the fact that those who were sent were Peter and John. In his account of the entry into Jerusalem, when speaking of work which any whatever of Jesus' servants could do for Him, he merely said that Jesus sent two disciples; but now he was careful to tell him that the two were members-elect of the order of Envoys. The position filled by the two other orders in connection with what was to take place he seems to be representing symbolically—the man bearing the pitcher of water, who led the way, representing the Helpers as baptizers; Baptism being the way into the household of God: the master of the house who had made everything ready as far as he was able, the Spokesmen as fathers over the people committed to their care. This man, in answer to their enquiry for the guest-chamber, showed them a large upper room furnished: but neither he, nor the water-bearer, had any part in this preparation for the feast; only the two Envoys-elect, Peter and John. Acting under Christ's personal orders, they were filling for Him the position filled by the levites in the temple when making all things ready for the sacrificing priest to offer his sacrifice; and served to show Theophilus the kind of men Envoys of Christ were to be:—men who, in this and all else, had learned to act as His personal servants.

The words quoted by the evangelist not only made the scene open plainly with Jesus as the leading character, but emphasized for Theophilus His presence at the feast, and

the close fellowship which those who partook of it would have with Him. It was for "us" that it was to be made ready, that "we" may eat; and in the message which they were to give it was, "where I shall eat the Passover with My pupils." It was "the Teacher" that spoke; as He Who had been teaching daily in the temple, Who had begun His work as the Christ by teaching in the synagogues about Himself and His kingdom: and now, as the Teacher with His pupils, He was seeking to share that feast with them, and make it the starting-point of all the instruction He was about to give them for carrying on His work.

b. 2.

STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD

14-34. The feast of unleavened bread.

When the hour had come—the hour when in the far-distant lands God's people sat down in little companies to partake of this feast of unleavened bread which went by the name of "the Passover," the hour when the twelve themselves in their Galilæan homes used to sit down to it—they all sat down together. This time, however, it was Jesus Who had provided the simple meal. It was His feast; and with Him the apostles sat down.

The feast itself the evangelist made no attempt whatever to describe, but merely mentioned two parts which had to do with things concerning the Envoys about which he was assuring Theophilus. Before doing this, however, he pointed out, by means of the trace-name "the apostles," that those whom Jesus was now commissioning to carry on His work as the Christ, the Head of the people of God, were men who had all passed through each of the two lower orders.

(14-18). The first part of the feast which he mentioned was the eating of the memorial offering itself; that which gave to it its name of "the Passover." The value which Jesus set upon the work which this had been doing was

shown by His great longing to partake of it. "With desire I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." For ages it had served to commemorate the Passover proper, the figure of That so soon to be offered; and now both it and the feast which it had kept in remembrance were about to pass away. It had done its work; and the desire of Jesus was to be there with them at its close, celebrate it for the last time, and replace it with a Feast which would last till the end of the world. Instead of a memorial of a lamb that was to be slain, there would henceforth be a memorial of the death of the Lamb of God so soon to suffer. Of that Memorial they and those who came after them would eat for all ages; but He himself would not partake of it until it was fulfilled in the kingdom of God: in that kingdom in its perfection in heaven, when all the true people of God would be gathered together at the great Feast with Jesus presiding.

The other part of the feast referred to by the evangelist was the drinking of the cup of wine which recalled the vine God brought out of Egypt; the race that He made His own, took under His special care, and unceasingly trained and prepared. That cup Jesus received; but, when He had given thanks, instead of drinking it, He gave it to the twelve to divide amongst themselves, because He Himself would not drink of the fruit of the vine from that time onward until the kingdom of God came. Whatever it was that was symbolized by the drinking of this cup, in that the Envoys would be left to themselves; left until the time when the kingdom of God would come: the time when, the work of preparation over, God's rule in all its fulness and perfection would come, and Christ would take unto Himself the power and reign.

Those two things of which the departing Christ would cease to partake foreshadowed the two things now about to be committed to the Envoys. The kind of instruction which they at the same time received was pointed out in

the part of the introduction which has to do with this section; that which speaks of His going out every night and lodging in the mount of Olives, like as He had lodged in the wilderness whilst being tempted by the devil. Those who share in the work of the departed Christ must also expect to share in the temptations which went with that work; so we find that the several parts of the account are connected with the three great temptations in the wilderness taken in the same order in which this evangelist has given them.

(19-22). The evangelist began by telling Theophilus about the change which Jesus made in the feast; how, instead of a memorial of the sacrifice of the paschal lamb and the feeding thereon, He instituted a Feast which would be a memorial of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God: a Feast in which, instead of eating the bread, or whatever it was that before the destruction of Jerusalem represented the body of the paschal lamb, people would eat the Bread of which the Lamb Himself said, "This is My Body."

In every miracle of Jesus there are three parts: first, the conditions at the outset; secondly, what Jesus said, or did; and thirdly, what followed. For instance, in the feeding of the five thousand we have first, five ordinary loaves and two small fishes; secondly, Jesus taking them, giving thanks, breaking them, and giving to the twelve to give to the people; and thirdly, all eating and satisfied. At the founding of the Eucharistic Feast we have only the first two parts: the ordinary bread; and Jesus taking, blessing, breaking, and giving it to the twelve. It is the unfinished, or rather the unending miracle; for it is still going on, and will go on until all have eaten and are satisfied: which will only be when, at the end of time, "It is completed in the kingdom of God," and Jesus Himself partakes of it with all who are gathered there.

But it was not to assure Theophilus about the institution of the Feast that the evangelist was telling him this.



What he had in view was something typified by what took place in the wilderness. There, under Moses, God's people received "bread from heaven," and were fed with it unceasingly. Under the Prophet like unto Moses they would likewise receive heavenly food, and be fed with it unceasingly; and it was to assure Theophilus of what he had been taught about the provision made for this feeding that the evangelist showed him Christ, before His departure, giving this consecrated Bread to the men with whom He was founding the order of Envoys. In other words it was to assure him that it was to the order of Envoys, as to stewards, that the supplying of this heavenly Food was committed.

So plain were the conclusions to be drawn from this act of Jesus, that the mere mention of it was supposed to be enough to assure him of the certainty of all that he had been taught about the right to administer this Sacrament. It showed at once that it was by the Envoys that the people were to be fed; and that it was from them alone that the Food could be obtained: for to them alone it was that the Sacrament was entrusted. It therefore had to be administered by them, or by men authorized to act for them; and they alone could give authority for administering it.

Like as he had been taught about the Spokesmen, so Theophilus was taught about the Envoys that they were frail, imperfect men; beset with temptations arising from their office, and always liable to fall. The temptation which would come with this part of their work was like that with which Jesus Himself was assailed in the wilderness as soon as He had entered into His office. With the power of miraculously providing food went the temptation to use that power for Himself, for His own profit or advantage; and a like temptation would assail those entrusted with the miraculously provided Food. Indeed, even as they sat there, one whose hand was with Him on the table, one commissioned to join with Him in the breaking of the Bread of

which He said "This is My Body," had agreed to sell Him for money. It was not because of the wounds and the bruises, the stripes and the death that followed the betrayal that the verdict came, "Woe to that man";—they would have come whether Judas had betrayed Him or not—but because he made money out of the Body of Christ, and also handed It over to men who did not believe in Him.

(23-30). In studying this treatise it is useful to bear in mind that the Jews of that day were eagerly looking for the Christ to come; that they were deeply interested in the things foretold about Him; and that those things would naturally have formed the subject of many a serious talk. The apostles, believing as they did that in Jesus they had found the Christ, would certainly have been no exceptions to the rule. They would not only have looked for the fulfilment of prophecies by Him, but would have talked about it amongst themselves. They would have looked, above all, for Him to do as Moses at God's command had done, and choose another band of twelve whom He would appoint as princes over the people of God (Num. 1:4 etc. and 2:2 etc); for, after the formation of the two other orders, that was the part of the fulfilment of the prophecy of Deut. 18:15 which would have appealed especially to them. It was as being men who knew that they themselves were the chosen band, men who knew the meaning of the divided cup at the feast, that they were now being set before Theophilus as a confirmation of the things which he had been taught about the Envoys.

It is not clear what the cup meant to the Jews of that age; but seeing that the vine which was brought out of Egypt was the people of Israel, it may have symbolized the people of God, and the handing of it over to the twelve may have meant the handing over to them of the people of God. But whatever meaning we give to it, this is plain; that Jesus, by giving it to them instead of drinking it Himself, handed over to them "until the kingdom of God shall

come" the place which He Himself was filling when, as the Head of the table, He received the cup.

When, as the Christ, He was about to begin the work now being handed over to the Envoys, the next temptation of the devil, as recorded by this evangelist, was to set all the kingdoms of the world before His eyes, and try to persuade Him to gain their authority and glory by worshipping before him: in other words, by recognizing the right of evil to exist, and making use of its power and aid; thus glorifying the devil by doing his works. To the Envoys of Christ, about to begin their work for Him, there had also come a vision of earthly power and glory; and with it the temptation to recognize the right of pride, that great well-spring of evil, to have a place in their hearts, and to treat it as an aid to zeal in their work—for it is with warnings against pride that this part of their preparation for carrying on the work of the departing Christ begins.

It was in very plausible ways that the temptation had come. First there was the uncertainty as to which of them would betray Jesus; and each one sought to guard his own fair name, and to keep undimmed the earthly glory which he hoped to have: but he sought it at the expense of others by placing the shame upon some one else. Then, as pride of office, it had shown itself more glaringly still in that very natural rivalry as to which was the greater. It was against those two forms of temptation that Jesus now safeguarded the twelve.

First of all He dealt with the pride which underlay their discussion about the betrayal. It was really the same kind of pride as that which sprang from the earthly authority and power which they wanted to have; the kind known as love of fame, and pride of power. Kings and governors of God's people they indeed would be; but not, as they had pictured to themselves, in lofty state and grandeur, looked up to by the people with awe and reverence. What they were hankering after was temporal power: so He showed

them temporal power by itself, undisguised by anything spiritual; something quite distinct from the power which He was giving them. The case which He took was that of the Gentiles; people who then had no part whatever with the people of God. Their kings and governors acted as lords and masters over them; and gained the title of Benefactors by exercising their authority upon them. All this was forbidden to the Envoys of Christ. Those were earthly kingdoms; whereas the kingdom which He was founding was not of this world, and in it no such food for pride was to find a place. However natural such dignity might be in the kingdoms of the world, it had no place whatever in the kingdom of God; and those who ruled for Christ had to learn first of all that earthly kings and rulers were not to be patterns for them.

Then He turned to the rivalry which had arisen among them as to which was accounted the greater: a rivalry whose ruling power was that same attribute of Satan, pride. Like the other discussion it seemed very reasonable; for it was about something which it was only right and proper to get settled. As Spokesmen they had been sent out in twos; a practice which had already been begun amongst them as Envoys. They could not both speak at the same time, or act at the same time; and the question was, Which of them should take the lead, or, seeing that the leadership of the two would fall to the lot of the greater, Which was the greater? That question Jesus did not answer; but guarded them instead against the temptation of the devil connected with it, one which would beset them in all their work for Him—the pride of office.

Whichever of the two should happen to be the greater, his bearing toward the other had to be that of the younger; which, in a land where such deference was shown to old age, meant one of humility and self-effacement. Also whichever of the two should have to take the lead, his attitude towards his fellow had to be that of a servant towards his master:

an example which Jesus Himself was even then setting them; for there were they reclining at the table, and He, Who was greater than any of them and Head of them all, was amongst them as a servant, waiting upon each one of them. And His example had to be their rule; both as regarded their behaviour towards each other, and their state of mind in every part of their office.

As to the experience which was to be required of any one before his appointment as an Envoy, the experience which would form the grounds for his claim to greatness, Theophilus was assured about that by the experience which Jesus certified that those whom He was appointing had had. They had continued with Him in His trials; seeing them, knowing about them, and learning how to meet them. The trials would be such as those recorded in this treatise: trials arising from the people, as, for instance, at the riot in the synagogue at Nazareth where Jesus, as the Christ, had gone counter to their will; trials arising from the clergy, from the false and unworthy, as illustrated by the Pharisees and scribes; trials such as they themselves were even then causing Him. With such trials the twelve had had much experience; and it was the citing of this fact by Jesus before appointing them that assured Theophilus of the rightness of the demand that those appointed to be Envoys should be men of experience, men who had had practical knowledge of the kind of cases with which they would have to deal.

After this summary of their preparation for the office, the evangelist went on to establish what Theophilus had been taught about the position and power of Envoys, by telling him about the commissioning of the twelve; a commission which explains the allusion to kings in the chapter upon the appointment of the Spokesmen. Jesus gave them "a kingdom"; a kingship which carried with it all the rule, authority, and power which the name implied in those days; qualified, however, by the fact that it was given them as the

Father had given a kingdom to His Son. The kingdom given to Jesus was solely for the glory of the Father: and although He ruled supreme, it was always the will of the Father that He carried out. So it was to be with the Envoys. Their kingship came from Christ; and although they would rule supreme, it was the will of Jesus that they were to carry out, and all was to be for His glory. The kingdom being theirs, the sole right of appointment would be theirs, and from them each official would receive his office, and authority to do the work which belonged to it; but it was as Christ's stewards that they had to allot these things, and the work had to be such as He had assigned to that office, the authority that which they themselves had received from Him, the Source of all authority.

This was what was meant by their eating and drinking at His table in His kingdom. The expression showed their nearness and oneness with the King; that they were His highest subjects, His highest officials: but it showed also that, although He had given them a kingdom, He had not resigned His kingship. His rule over the house of Jacob was eternal: and their position was that of subordinate princes in His kingdom, filling the highest offices in it, but always under Him; with Him as their Head, even as He was at the head of the table at which they would eat and drink.

Then as Moses had chosen and appointed twelve princes, one over each of the twelve tribes, to help him in his work (Num. 1:4, and 2:2 etc.), the Prophet like unto Moses appointed them to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Like as it was with the other orders, the number with which this new order was begun served as its birth-mark, and showed that, for all time, its distinctive mark was to be kingship: a kingship such as Jesus had described, from Him, under Him, and for His glory; but, with those limitations, an absolute rule over the Church of Christ.

(31-34). The third great part of the work of the Christ

in connection with which Jesus was tempted was that of interpreting and teaching the word of God. That work was already theirs as Spokesmen. The chapter upon their training for it began with the casting out of a dumb devil,—a lesson upon the influence of Satan—and closed with the dangers which were awaiting them, and the penalty for denying the Son of man before men: whilst the chapter upon the instructions given them for doing the work closed with the apostles saying to the Lord, "Increase our faith." That same work would still be theirs as Envoys; only they would fill a higher and more responsible place as the last appeal for the meaning of the word of God, and the use to which it was to be put:—a duty which would form a part of their judgeship when, as it was figuratively put, they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Hence their share in the last great temptation.

In the account of that temptation, Satan, setting Jesus on the pinnacle of the temple, was being pictured as recognizing Him as holding the highest position over the house of God, and then challenging His faith in His office, and in the promise of God that went with it. The Envoys too would be, as it were, on pinnacles of the temple, over the house of God which is the Church of the living God; and their faith in their office and the promises which go with it would, in like manner, be tested.

The strange and marvellous fact which Jesus made known to them was, that like as Satan had been allowed to lead Him to Jerusalem to try Him, so he had got leave to try them too. The attack would be upon their faith; faith in their divinely given position, in Christ's promises and care, in His unfailing presence and help whereby alone the work of their office could be done; faith in His word itself. Satan had begged to have them for himself that he might sift them as wheat: but Jesus had prayed for Simon that his strength should not fail; and when he had turned again he was to stablish his brethren.

The vision set before them was that of grains of wheat being shaken to and fro in a sieve, twisted and turned in all directions, till the shrivelled, the small, and the worthless, all that fell short of the proper standard, had passed through the meshes, rejected. From the shrinking and loss of their faith this fall and rejection of Envoys would come; and it was upon their faith that Satan's attacks would be made by means of his well-known wiles. Trials and troubles, doubts and fears would disturb them, efforts to turn them this way and that; till, bewildered, they would use the promises of God amiss, as Satan before had tried, but tried in vain, to get their Lord to do. One instance only was given them; and that, as usual with the examples in this treatise, was an extreme case, Peter's faith being so very strong. What Jesus did for him, He would assuredly do for those who were weaker: and all His Envoys could be certain that for them too He would pray that they should not lose their faith so much that they would pass through the sieve and be amongst the castaways; and that, as it was with Peter, His prayer would be answered. For it was as taking that answer for granted that Jesus went on to say, "When thou art turned back, strengthen thy brethren"; turned back, that is, from the downward course that he was taking as his faith grew weak. Thus their safeguard would be both the prayer of Jesus, and the help which each was to have from the others; the weak helped by the stronger.

There was more, however, for the evangelist to tell Theophilus in order to make him sure of what he had been taught about this special temptation; and that was the reality of the devil and his onslaughts. What the twelve had just been taught about the way in which an evil spirit was allowed to treat the servants of Christ was something so strange, and so thoroughly out of keeping with what they would expect, that, to help them to credit it, they were also told something in connection with it in which they



could see and know his presence and his work, and judge of the unseen by the seen.

Peter was so sure of his faith in his Lord that he declared—and his declaration was not presumption; but something which every follower of Jesus should be able to say, and say with confidence—that with Him he would go to prison and to death; the two great dangers which they had been told they would have to face for Jesus. His mistake was, that he overlooked some of the words of Jesus, and only took into account physical dangers; putting the danger from Satan aside, either as being something unreal, or else as being something from which he himself was exempt: and it was to correct that mistake, and bring home to himself and the others the reality of that danger, that he was told of the strange, bad fall that would shame him.

Addressing him as Peter, as if to say, “I tell thee, O strong one, the rock, as thou deemest thyself,” Jesus told him that the cock would not crow that day until he had denied all knowledge of Him; and that, not once,—an act done mayhap through thoughtlessness, or the sudden impulse of fear—but three times; a full, and deliberate denial. The knowledge that such a strange prediction came true, and that a straightforward man like Peter told lies so appalling, would ever be a warning to those who doubted, or set lightly aside, the danger from the devil, the father of lies, against whom the twelve were, at the same time, being warned.

### b. 3.

#### OVERSEERS OF THE PEOPLE'S NEEDS

#### 35-38. The apostles' outfit.

The next thing that Theophilus was told about the departing Christ and His Envoys had to do with the third scene in the introduction to the chapter; that in which all the people came early in the morning to Jesus in the temple

to hear Him. It was a picture of the flock, at the beginning of another day, all gathered around the great Shepherd in the fold; waiting to hear His voice, and be led forth on their journey through the wilderness of life, sure that their needs would all be supplied. About the supply of their spiritual needs, such as pardon, the knowledge of the will of God, and help to do it, provided through the Spokesmen, and the spiritual food and governance through the Envoys, Theophilus had already been told; but about the supply of their temporal needs, the needs of the poor, the destitute, and the down-trodden, the successors of those set free on the day of jubilee, he had not been told. But it was something about which he had also to know; for the control of the finances of any body is always a matter of importance because of the power and influence that go with it: so we find him assured about the charge of what are known as the temporalities of the Church by being shown the twelve receiving the last part of their commission.

From the question which Jesus asked them, "When I sent you forth without purse, and wallet, and shoes, lacked ye anything?" it is plain that, although no mention was made of them at the ordination of the seventy, the apostles also were of that number. By thus quoting this question to Theophilus the evangelist contrasted the two orders, and drew his attention to the fact that this new work of the Envoys was no part of the Spokesmen's duties. He also reminded him by it that the twelve, having received the Spokesmen's Ordination, those personal rules which Spokesmen had to follow still applied to them; for their Spokesmanship was not forfeited by their becoming Envoys. As Spokesmen, Jesus had provided for them through His people; and He would still provide for them. Moreover His rule still held good that they should eat and drink such things as were given them; so that an Envoy who asked for money or goods for himself would stand self-condemned as a false Spokesman.

In the commission now being given to the twelve there were two parts; one betokened by the purse and wallet, the other by the sword. The purses and wallets, which they were now told to carry, were not for holding money and things for themselves, but for others; and were emblems of their office, showing that it was they who were to be providers for the needy, and that it was to them that all such funds were to be brought. The badge of the purse and wallet was theirs alone. To the order of Envoys, and to that alone, belonged the charge and the management of the Church funds. It was their right. By the nature of their office they were the overseers.

But what the sword typified was a duty which had not only to be performed by every one who belonged to the order, but was shared by others as well. Those who had to buy swords were those who had been without them whilst they were Spokesmen. The swords were not for self-defence, but for the protection of others, the weak, the helpless, the down-trodden; the followers of Him Who was reckoned with the transgressors, and therefore treated as such themselves. How important this part of their work was, was shown by the command that he who had no sword was to sell his garment and buy one; sacrificing not only comfort, but respect and position in the eyes of the world for the sake of being able to shield the people of God.

It must have seemed strange to men who had just been appointed princes in the kingdom of God to hear their Lord apply to Himself such a prophecy as that of being reckoned with the transgressors; and in order to prepare them for such conditions, He went on to assure them solemnly that the things concerning Him had fulfilment. Every prophecy about Him would be fulfilled: so that they had to be ready to share in the shame as well as in the glory; the cross as well as the crown.

Again there was impressed upon them, this time by the remark about the two swords, that they belonged to a broth-

erhood: one in which none was to be left to struggle single-handed against difficulty or danger; but, side by side, the work of the Church of Christ was to be carried on.

b. 4.

PRAYERFUL

39-46. The agony on the mount of Olives.

Everything that is in this treatise was told Theophilus with the same end in view; namely, to assure him of something about which he had been instructed. The part with which this chapter dealt was what he had been taught about the commission of the Envoys, and the temptations that went with it. Each part of their work brought its own peculiar temptation; but that which went with the overseership was so dangerous that, instead of dealing with it at the same time as the giving of the commission as he had done before, the evangelist devoted two separate sections to it. The overseership itself he dealt with in the third section, as if it formed the main part of the subject of the chapter; whilst, after the fashion of the former chapters, this fourth section, in which he began to deal with its temptation, has to do with the way in which its duties were to be carried out.

The scene which he set before Theophilus was that of Jesus going, as His nightly custom was, to the mount of Olives, to the place of trial, and conflict with the devil; the little band following Him as pupils about to be taught a lesson, and Jesus saying to them, when He came to the place, "Pray not to enter into temptation."

The key to this scene was given him in the introduction to the chapter. There he was shown the chief priests, the spiritual heads of the people, joined with the scribes, the judges of the people, seeking to put Jesus to death as one who was reckoned with the transgressors; and Satan working with them. Satan's plan was to enter into Judas, one of the twelve, the man who had charge of the funds, and

get him to make money by using his position to betray his Lord. The temptation, against entering into which they were specially to pray, was thus the temptation which would beset them as bearers of the purse and wallet to benefit themselves by their position as overseers.

Theophilus had evidently been taught that their strength lay in having Jesus with them, and obeying His command to pray; for the evangelist pictured Him as being dragged away from them, as if dreading to leave them alone. What he had been told about the breaking up of the little band, how Judas, one of the twelve, had surrendered to Satan, was enough to explain to him how it was that Jesus seemed to hang over those who were left; and why, when He was dragged away as if by some unseen power, it was only, as it were, for a stone's throw; so that He could always be at hand, ready to help. There He knelt down and prayed.

Satan, who after the three great temptations had departed from Him until a season, had returned to make another and more dangerous attack; and was aiming at destroying the work of Jesus and bringing His coming to naught by breaking up the Church which He was founding. The cup which Jesus prayed might pass from Him without His drinking it was the cup of sorrow that one of His chosen band, one of the leaders of His Church, should yield to Satan, and turn against his Lord. It was the sad sight of Jesus praying in His agony that that cup might pass from Him that confirmed what Theophilus had been taught about the awfulness of Envoys of Christ yielding to this temptation, and betraying their trust by using their position for their own profit; and confirmed also the justice of the penalty, however severe, which he had been told would be the lot of one who fell.

Then the evangelist showed him Jesus rising from prayer, coming to them, and finding them lying down sleeping. Sorrow at the sight of their Master's pain had made them sink down to the ground, and had lulled them to

sleep; but nothing, not even sorrow for the pains of Jesus, was to keep them from prayer. Fitting as their grief was, they had let it keep them from praying by making them sleep. It had cut them off from the source of strength, and had sunk them down to a low, and useless level. They had to rise, rise to their knees and pray, in order that they should not enter into temptation; then rise from their knees, able to handle their difficult task unharmed, safe from the snares of the devil.

### b. 5.

#### GENTLE

#### 47-53. The betrayal.

There was another part of their duty as overseers about which Theophilus had to be assured, that which was symbolized by the sword they had been told to get; for they would also have to defend God's people from the kind of attack which, in the introduction, was illustrated by Judas, Satan's tool, seeking opportunity to deliver Jesus to the chief priests and captains of the temple—in other words, from the powers of darkness acting through bad, or mistaken men. The way in which they were to use the sword is shown in this fifth section; which, as in former chapters upon the training for the ministry, deals with their behaviour in carrying out the duties of their office. In it the evangelist has taken in turn, first the case of the traitor, then that of the rank and file, and lastly that of their leaders; and has shown the example which Jesus set in dealing with each of those cases.

Whilst Jesus was teaching His Envoys how to keep from entering into temptation, there came one who, having failed to guard against it, had entered, and fallen. Out of the darkness a multitude came; and at their head was Judas. Instead of being a ruler in the kingdom of God and serving Christ, he was there as a traitor at the head of a mob attacking Him; and the form of his treachery was

Satanic in its meanness—betrayal as a friend, by a kiss.

The way in which Jesus behaved towards the traitor was the way in which His Envoys were to behave. He made no reproaches: He showed no indignation: neither was He aroused in the least by the baseness of the attack. He simply unmasked the traitor, and proclaimed the real meaning of his show of affection. "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

As to their behaviour towards the actual attackers, when they saw what was coming the fierce manhood of that little Galilæan band was aroused. A mere handful of men, they stood there before the multitude ready to give their lives in defence of their Lord; and there came to their lips the eager prayer, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" And one of them, without waiting for an answer, smote with the sword; and making choice of a slave, one who had to obey his master's orders, the slave of the high priest the chief leader of their foes, he cut off his right ear. It was very human; but it was not to be the way of the kingdom of God. They were to defend the cause of Christ; but not with violence: not even if the attack seemed to lead, as it did then, to the seizure of Jesus Himself. "Suffer thus far," was His answer to their question about smiting with the sword; let things take their course even to the end which they foresaw: and He condemned the violence of His follower, and openly rejected such aid, by healing the servant's ear.

Then came the way in which they were to deal with the leaders of the foe; and it was still the way of Jesus, the great Leader and Guardian of the people of God. Turning to the chief priests, the captains of the temple, and the elders, the leaders opposed to Him, He gently rebuked them: "Are ye come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves?" Then just as gently He reasoned with them, pointing out that there was something wrong with them:

for when He was daily with them in the temple, they stretched forth no hand against Him; but now, at night, and away from the house of God, they did. It was their hour, their time of success, He told them; but He also told them plainly that the authority they were exercising was that of darkness. They were working under Satan, the prince of darkness.

c. 1.

SIFTED BY SATAN

54-62. Peter's denials.

The account of Peter's denials served to show what was meant by Satan's sifting; and confirmed what Jesus had said about their danger from him by showing how the accompanying prediction came true.

Satan had got Peter into his power when he separated him from Jesus, and made him, through fear or otherwise, to follow afar off. According to his rule of service Peter had to deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Jesus. His place was thus by the side of his Lord, both when seized and led away, and when taken to the house of His foe; but he left out all that had to do with bearing his cross, and though he followed Jesus, it was afar off. Then he sat amongst the enemies of his Lord as if he himself were one of them.

The sifting went on; and Peter fell lower and lower, as thrice the father of lies made his victim lie. The first time, when he denied knowing Jesus, it was most likely on the impulse of the moment; as perchance was also the second, when he denied being one of His followers; but the third, that which took place after the space of about an hour, when he had had ample time to think of what he was doing, was clearly deliberate. Then he denied that he even understood what the man was talking about when he charged him with being with Jesus. And whilst he yet spake, the cock crew.



The Lord turned, and looked upon His servant; and that look broke Satan's hold upon him, and swept away that which was darkening his understanding. The plausible excuses with which he had salved his conscience ceased to avail. He knew then that what Jesus had said about their danger was true. Satan had indeed been sifting him; and he had fallen. And he went out, and wept bitterly: a sadder and a wiser man; sure now of the reality of Satan and his attacks.

c. 2.

SIGNS OF SATAN

63-65. The ill-treatment of Jesus.

The short account of the cruelty of the captors of Jesus confirmed what Theophilus had been told about Satan's being the moving power in the attack; and also helped to complete what he had been told about the behaviour of servants of Christ towards those who differed from them.

Ill-treatment of the helpless, mockery of the down-trodden, brutality to a prisoner bound and unresisting, are works of the devil; signs of his indwelling in the doers. The blindfolding, jeering, and blows, the "Prophecy: who smote Thee," and the finding pleasure in such things, were all signs of an evil nature bringing forth fruits of the devil: as were also the revilings in which they gave vent to their feelings towards Him Whom they now had in their power.

Violence and abuse belong to the service of Satan; and have no place in the service of Christ.

## CHAPTER T.

ST. LUKE XXII. 66.—XXIV. 53.

(a). xxii. 66-71. (b). xxiii. 1.—xxiv. 49. (c). xxiv. 50-53.

(a).

xxii. 66-71. And as soon as it was day, the assembly of the elders of the people was gathered together, both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away into their council, saying, If thou art the Christ, tell us. But he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I ask you, ye will not answer. But from henceforth shall the Son of man be seated at the right hand of the power of God. And they all said, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What further need have we of witness? for we ourselves have heard from his own mouth.

(b). 1.

xxiii. 1-12. And the whole company of them rose up, and brought him before Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest.

And Pilate said unto the chief priests and the multitudes, I find no fault in this man. But they were the more urgent, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judæa, and beginning from Galilee even unto this place. But when Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man were a Galilæan. And when he knew that he was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him unto Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem in these days.

Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was of a long time desirous to see him, because he had heard con-

cerning him; and he hoped to see some miracle done by him. And he questioned him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and the scribes stood, vehemently accusing him. And Herod with his soldiers set him at naught, and mocked him, and arraying him in gorgeous apparel sent him back to Pilate.

And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

## 2.

13-25. And Pilate called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said unto them, Ye brought unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod: for he sent him back unto us; and behold, nothing worthy of death hath been done by him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him. But they cried out all together, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas: one who for a certain insurrection made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison. And Pilate spake unto them again, desiring to release Jesus; but they shouted, saying, Crucify, crucify him. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath this man done? I have found no cause of death in him, I will therefore chastise him and release him. But they were instant with loud voices, asking that he might be crucified. And their voices prevailed.

And Pilate gave sentence that what they asked for should be done. And he released him that for insurrection and for murder had been cast into prison, whom they asked for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will.

## 3.

26-32. And when they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, and laid on him the cross, to bear it after Jesus. And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains,

Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

And there were also two others, malefactors led with him to be put to death.

## 4.

33-43. And when they came unto the place which is called The skull, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left. And parting his garments among them, they cast lots.

And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also scoffed at him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, offering him vinegar, and saying, If thou art the King of the Jews, save thyself. And there was also a superscription over him, This is the King of the Jews. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us. But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

## 5.

44-49. And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun's light failing: and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost. And when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

And all the multitudes that came together to this sight, when they beheld the things that were done, returned smiting their breasts. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed with him from Galilee, stood afar off, seeing these things.

## 6.

50-56. And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a councillor, a good man and a righteous (he had not consented to their counsel

and deed), a man of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews, who was looking for the kingdom of God: this man went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.

And he took it down, and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb that was hewn in stone, where never man had yet lain.

And it was the day of the Preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

And the women, which had come with him out of Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how the body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments.

## 7.

xxiii. 56.-xxiv. 11. And on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment. And on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. And they entered in, and found not the body.

And it came to pass, while they were perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel: and as they were affrighted, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

And they remembered his words, and returned from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. Now they were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James: and the other women with them told these things unto the apostles.

And these words appeared in their sight as idle talk; and they disbelieved them.

## 8.

13-35. And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was threescore furlongs from Jerusalem. And they communed with each other of all these things which had happened.

And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto

them, What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk?

And they stood still, looking sad. And one of them, named Cleopas, answering said unto him, Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days?

And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel. Yea and beside all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body, they came saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go further. And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in to abide with them.

And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

And they said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread.

## 9.

36-43. And as they spake these things, he himself stood in the midst of them. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit.

And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do reasonings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having.

And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish. And he took it, and did eat before them.

## 10.

44-49. And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations.

Beginning from Jerusalem, ye are witnesses of these things.

And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.

## (c).

50-53. And he led them out until they were over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them. And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God.

## CHAPTER T. XXII. 66.—XXIV. 53.

### WITNESSES FOR THE SON OF GOD

*a.* xxii. 66-71. *b.* xxiii. 1—xxiv. 49. *c.* xxiv. 50-53.

*Gabriel.* i. 33. And of His kingdom there shall be no end.

*John.* iii. 21, 22. Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, that, Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon Him, and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased.

*a.*

xxii. 66-71. *Introduction.* This last chapter of the treatise is the completion of the first; and gives the final answer to the question which was made the subject of the first, Who is Jesus of Nazareth? Like that chapter it is divided into ten sections, instead of five; and like it too it treats of Jesus' twofold nature, the human and divine; as is plainly set forth in the introduction.

The last thing which Gabriel had announced to the Virgin Mary about the Child Who was to be born of her, was that there would be no end to the kingdom which He would have; the Church which He would found, and over which He would rule. Unceasing, uncrushable, that Church would for ever be a living witness to the truth of Gabriel's words; a memorial of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary. Earthly kingdoms rise and fall, but the kingdom of Christ ever remains. Heaven and earth will pass away; but not His kingdom. Through all eternity it will exist. But only God can



uphold and guide the eternal: so we find that when the evangelist, in his early outline, had set before Theophilus the people all baptized, and then showed him Jesus, also baptized, coming to be their Leader, it was as the Son of God; and when, in this chapter, he assured him of what he had been taught about the King of that eternal kingdom, it was by giving him proofs that Jesus of Nazareth, the Head of the Church, is God.

So important a place did this fill in the plan of the treatise, that means were given Theophilus for testing even the statements which set forth the subject-matter in the introduction. Those means were the Sanhedrin, and the record of their doings that morning. At the dawn of day, the very earliest hour at which they could meet, they had been called together. It was that same day of the feast of unleavened bread on which Jesus had been taken prisoner, (for the Jewish day began in the evening,) so that there was little, or no interval between His trial before the high priest and His trial by the Sanhedrin. Never, from the time when they had seized Him, was the Prisoner out of the sight of His foes.

The Sanhedrin having assembled, Jesus was led into the council-chamber, where the members in a semicircle sat. By mentioning the Sanhedrin in connection with the trial of Jesus, the evangelist was telling Theophilus where he could go to verify what he was being told about it; for shorthand reporters took notes of the evidence when any one was tried before that body. Of what took place he only related two things: the charge upon which they sought to condemn Him; and that from which He deliberately made His accusation come.

Their demand, "If thou art the Christ, tell us," was evidently based upon what they had heard; and shows that it was well known that not only had He made Himself out to be the Christ, but that He had acted as if He were: and it is just as evident that they had meant to condemn Him for

having done so. Jesus, however, set that aside as something secondary, neither admitting, nor discussing, His Christhood; and made His trial turn upon what has always been the real issue, His divinity. Taking it for granted that He had fulfilled the Messianic part of His mission, and had shown Himself plainly to be the Christ, He declared that from that time the Son of man would be seated at the right hand of God: a declaration which they saw at once was a claim not simply to be the Christ about Whom they had asked, but to be divine. From all sides came the question, "Art thou then the Son of God?" and it was because of His own solemn assertion that He is the Son of God that He was unanimously condemned. Thus all His judges, the chief priests, scribes, and elders, became witnesses to the fact that He Himself solemnly vouched for the truth of this claim.

The evangelist had already shown Theophilus that the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth was neither an after-thought, nor man-made; but that it began before His birth, and came from the unseen world, from God the Father: and he had also shown him that Jesus Himself lived and acted, not as a man seeking to be thought divine, but as One, Whose claim to divinity needed no proof, seeking to convince people of His position and power as the Son of man. But he had done far more than merely tell Theophilus about the divinity of Jesus. He had given him proofs for everything that he told him; and had supplied him at every step with references to whom he could go and find out for himself that what he had been told was true. He had given him references for the existence of Gabriel, and his claim to speak for God; references for the Incarnation, and Jesus' birth of the Virgin Mary. He had moreover traced the Child to manhood with His twofold nature, the human and divine, giving references at every step. In doing this he had more than once made use of the fact, that when an announcement of something belonging to the unseen world was made, faith

in it was helped by the announcement of some event in connection with it which could be tested by earthly methods. The sign of the Babe in the manger, given by the herald angel at His birth, was for the shepherds, to convince them of the reality of what they had seen and heard: the sign for all mankind that that Babe is the Lord is that He is the Christ; and that strange, complex portrait drawn by the prophets centuries before, the evangelist has shown that Jesus exactly filled.

But of all the testimony to the divinity of Jesus which he recorded, by far the most important was that of Jesus Himself. In the presence of the elders of the people He spoke as having a personal knowledge of things divine, and declared Himself to be the Son of God. That He did this there was no gainsaying; for, as Theophilus could find by enquiry, it was guaranteed by all the members of the Sanhedrin, as well as by the recorded vote which condemned Him to death. Upon the truth of that statement depended the certainty of all that he had been taught; the whole structure of Christianity itself. Whoever accepts it as true, receives everything that Jesus said or did as the sayings and doings of God, and worships Him as God.

The course which the evangelist took to assure Theophilus about this statement of Jesus was that which would naturally be taken when testing a witness who had made a declaration which could not easily be put to the proof; a declaration about a state of things with which he alone claimed to be familiar. Something that could be tested, something that he had said in connection with the same state of things, would be taken and carefully examined; and by the result the value of his evidence would be gauged. What the evangelist chose was something which fittingly went with the claim to divinity which Jesus had made the cause of His death-sentence; for it was a claim to have such an intimate knowledge of the spirit-world, and such power in both it and the physical world, that He was able, not only to say

that He would rise again, but to fix the very day upon which He would do so. It was a claim to supernatural power; for it was a claim to be able to override the laws of nature, which is something that only the Creator can do. Speaking of Himself as the Son of man, He had said, "They shall scourge and kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again."

The life which He laid down He would take again; re-occupy once more the body which would be laid in the grave, and live again as Jesus of Nazareth. This He would do of Himself by the same power by which all His miracles were done; the power of the Holy Spirit, Whom He had received from the Father at His Baptism. This being the source of the power which He used, and seeing that it was the Father's will that was being done, it is sometimes said that it was the Father Who raised Him from the dead: but this evangelist has regarded the resurrection as something which Jesus Himself did, and the foretelling of it as the great test which Jesus Himself offered in connection with His claim to be God; and has treated people's faith in His divinity as depending upon the certainty with which they believed that He actually did what He said He would do, and rose again the third day.

To prove that any one has risen from the dead, it is clear that it must first of all be proved that he really died. Hence in showing Theophilus the certainty of what He had been taught, that He, Whom so many had seen after that feast of unleavened bread, had risen from the dead, the evangelist had first to assure him of Jesus' death. When of two things that are being proved, one is so well-known that only a formal statement of it is necessary, the bulk of the proof given will naturally fall to the other. Here, for instance, it is devoted to the death of Jesus; and, as regards His resurrection, only sufficient facts are cited to show that He was alive on the third day after His death. Now in such a proof the identification of the person said to have died fills an all-im-

portant place; and Theophilus had to know without the shadow of a doubt that it was Jesus Himself Who was put to death; and that it was the same Jesus Who was alive on the third day. We find therefore that he was not only assured of the death of Jesus, but was also certified of His identity throughout the whole account.

It should be borne in mind that the people who had to be satisfied about the resurrection were living at the time when the treatise was written and could enquire themselves into the evidence offered them, and also cross-examine the witnesses whose names were given; and any reader nowadays who wants to enter fully into the treatise, and especially into the proofs now being given, must, of necessity, take the stand-point of a contemporary. It should also be noted that the evidence which the evangelist brought forward was clearly chosen to meet objections which such an enquirer as Theophilus would have raised.

*Summary.* The Prisoner, Who had never been out of the hands of His enemies, was taken by them to Pilate, and identified as the Man Who claimed to be Christ the King; a charge which He admitted: and then taken to Herod, and identified as Jesus the well-known worker of miracles. Certified thus to be Jesus Christ, He was never lost sight of until He was dead and buried. Sentenced to death, He was traced from Pilate to Calvary, and identified upon the cross; His death was attested, and His burial vouched for.

The proofs of His resurrection which are given are taken solely from what happened upon the first day of the week, "the third day" after His crucifixion. Prominent in the account we find the apostles, the first members of the order which was to witness to the resurrection. To them, as to a jury, the evidence is described as having been brought; and to them Theophilus was thereby specially referred.

First there was brought to them by the women the news of the empty tomb, and of the angel's explanation that Jesus

was living: an explanation which the apostles treated as worthless.

Later in the day, one of their own number saw Jesus, and told them about it; and while they were discussing it, two of their fellow-pupils came in from Emmaus, and told them about the long walk they had had with Him, and all that had taken place: evidence which they could not reject, but tried to account for by a theory of a spiritual resurrection.

In the midst of their talk, Jesus Himself came and stood amongst them. In His hands and feet were nail marks of a shape which none but a crucified man would have; but it was only when they had handled Him, and found that He had flesh and bones, and when, before their eyes, He ate the food they gave Him, that their spiritual resurrection theory broke down, and they knew that it was Jesus Himself Who stood there before them.

Marked out by His resurrection to be the Son of God, and speaking as the Son of God, He then confirmed what He had done as the Son of man, and completed their Ordination as Envoys, making them witnesses for His resurrection.

His earthly career closed, as that of the Prophet like unto Moses would have to close, with blessing them; thereby making their giving of that blessing a testimony to the Ascension, the occasion when it began to be poured out upon them.

#### b. 1.

#### THE IDENTIFICATION

xxiii. 1-12. Jesus before Pilate and Herod.

The evangelist began his proof by showing that it was Jesus Himself Who was tried before Pilate and condemned to death. The chief witnesses in His identification were the members of the Sanhedrin, men keen for His death. A Roman condemnation having also to be obtained before He could be lawfully put to death, they gave Him up to the

Gentiles, and testified that He was the Man Who claimed to be the Christ.

Only the bare outlines of the case are given. The charges which they made were three in number, increasing in gravity. First, there was that of perverting the nation; then, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar; and lastly, the death-bringing one of saying that He Himself was Christ a king. It is plain that to support those charges they would have had to prove that the Prisoner was really the Man Who had claimed to be the Christ, and had acted as if He were.

In answer to Pilate's question, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" the Prisoner replied that He was. To Pilate this would mean that He claimed to be a kind of earthly king; whilst to the Jews, and to all who knew about Jesus, it meant that He claimed to be the Messiah: but in either case Theophilus would find that it was as claiming to be king of the Jews that the charge was entered in the official records of the trial.

His being identified before Herod arose from Pilate's declaration to the chief priests and to the multitudes that he found no fault in Jesus. However much the Sanhedrin may have been shorn of its authority, its efforts to keep the people in order would have had the fullest support of the Romans; a support which would naturally have taken the form of the punishment of offenders. It was this support that was being claimed when Jesus was charged before Pilate with perverting the nation. The charges of forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He Himself was Christ a king, were added to show the Romans the form which His perverting took, and to provide them with something which would justify them in putting Him to death. It would be those two charges into which Pilate had examined. Finding them groundless, he had set aside that of perverting the people. Evidently thinking that his verdict would be a popular one, he made it known to the multitudes as well as to the chief priests: but instead of hailing it with joy,

they insisted that the charge of perverting the nation was true; and in support of it brought up fresh accusations, in the course of which they happened to speak of Galilee. Pilate was evidently trying to act with perfect fairness towards the Prisoner; for, finding that it was a case which he did not understand, and that Jesus was from Galilee and therefore of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, as one to whom such things were familiar, for him to judge it. By so doing he helped to establish the fact that the Prisoner was Jesus of Nazareth.

It was as being Jesus, the great Teacher and Worker of miracles, that the Prisoner was sent to Herod, received by him, questioned by him, and accused by the chief priests and scribes. Jesus, however, answered him nothing. Thereupon the silent Prisoner was mockingly clothed with a purple robe; and, labelled thus, was sent back to Pilate.

Herod had no jurisdiction in Jerusalem, and therefore no law-court there; so there would have been no official records by which Theophilus could test the truth of what he had been told of Jesus' trial before him. That was why the evangelist confirmed his account by referring him to the friendship which sprang up between those two old foes, upon the very day that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. That friendship showed that Herod had found that Pilate was not deceiving him when he sent the Prisoner to him as the Jesus Whom he had so long desired to see; and also that Pilate was satisfied that He, Who was returned to him clad in that purple robe, was the same Man Whom he had shortly before sent to Herod. And further, from the way in which the friendship is spoken of as something lasting, it is clear that neither Herod nor Pilate found afterwards that he had been deceived by the other about the Prisoner's being Jesus Christ.

For the friendship of Pilate and Herod to have been so noteworthy that it was chosen in preference to anything else to assure the readers of the treatise that it was Jesus Who



had been sent to Herod and returned by him to Pilate, it must have been a thing of living interest to the people of that time, a state of affairs still existing. Such a friendship would have become a matter of indifference after one or other of the two had ceased to be in power; and would have lost much of its force as evidence when once it had become a thing of the past. And a thing of the past it became when Pilate was recalled at the close of A. D. 36, or the beginning of A. D. 37; so that its being used as evidence points, like the things already noticed, to a very early date for the writing of the treatise; to a date, in fact, within six years of the Crucifixion. It is needless to say that the course of instruction for which the treatise vouches must have been given earlier still.

The treatise was evidently written by one who had been trained for the second order of the ministry; and written for the sake of others who had received the same training. The copyists' way of leaving out all dividing spaces between chapters and sections must have made it very hard for people to understand it without the aid of some one who had received the instruction with which it deals; and the very early loss of all knowledge of its purpose and plan makes it likely that there were comparatively few who had received that instruction. Such a state of things would be accounted for by the abrupt close which must have come to any such training through the persecution which arose about Stephen; when only the apostles were left at Jerusalem, and the body of men gathered there was scattered abroad, its members going everywhere and acting as preachers of the Word. That took place about four years after the Crucifixion; which would leave only four years in which the course of instruction could have been given.

Putting all these things together, it would seem that a training school for clergy, taught by eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word, was established at Jerusalem soon after the day of Pentecost; and that, after going on for three or

four years, it was broken up by the civil authorities, and the students scattered. So highly did those men esteem the training they had received, that a number of them sought to preserve it by drawing up accounts of the course of lectures which had been given them: and it was the sight of their efforts which led the evangelist to gather up the fruits of his own studies and researches, and publish them in this treatise as a kind of hand-book for the clergy of his day; arranging them as if in answer to one Theophilus, "a friend of God," one of those whom Jesus called His friends, who was enquiring into the validity of the Ordination he had received, and of the duties and powers which, he had been taught, went with it.

b. 2.

THE CONDEMNATION

xxiii. 13-25. The trial before the rulers.

It was at the third trial that the death-sentence was passed upon Jesus. Not that He was tried again upon all of the charges. Of the last two Pilate was the sole judge; and as he had decided upon them himself, there was of them no further question. With the charge of misleading the people, however, the Jewish rulers had also to do. As the spiritual rulers of the people, it was their place to keep them in order; and it was as trying to do so that they were claiming the Roman governor's help. But Pilate could not see his way to help them. As far as he himself had been able to make out, nothing worthy of death had been done by the Prisoner; but as, owing to the strangeness of the case, he might have been mistaken, he had sent Him to Herod, who knew more of those matters, for him to decide what ought to be done. Herod also could see no reason for agreeing with the Jewish rulers, and had returned the Prisoner to Pilate uncondemned. Upon this Pilate called a meeting of the chief priests and rulers, and laid the matter before them; to see if, upon further consideration of it, they would agree to an

acquittal. The "people," who, according to the charge, had been led astray, were also summoned by him; either for the sake of their evidence, or else in hopes that they would cry out for the release of Jesus, and thereby influence their rulers.

Pilate spoke to them as to his fellow-judges, to whom, as well as to himself, Herod had returned the Prisoner as guiltless—"for," said he, "he sent Him back unto us";—after recalling the result of the trials, he gave them to understand that he thought a scourging, for having acted in such a way as to give all that trouble, would meet the merits of the case; and proposed that, having done that, he should let the Prisoner go.

His plan failed: for they all cried out for Jesus to be made away with, and Barabbas to be released to them;—a man who had not only perverted the people, but had himself committed murder.

To show Theophilus that the governor did all that could be done to get them to forego their claim upon his help, the evangelist told him that Pilate tried three times to get those rulers to agree to the release of Jesus. But they still refused, and demanded that their verdict should be carried out. Pilate therefore gave sentence that what they asked for should be done: and in that form the death-sentence would have been recorded.

The result of the trial is summed up very strikingly. The man guilty of sedition and murder, for whom they had asked, was released; whereas Jesus, innocent of the charge against Him, was delivered up to their will. Once more He was in the power of His enemies; but this time with the Romans acting for them.

Besides having the court records to which he could refer, Theophilus would have found no lack of evidence for what he had been told about the death-sentence of Jesus. The strange sight of Pilate seeking to save a Jew; the Roman governor pleading with Jewish rulers for the release of a

prisoner, and pleading in vain, would have made the case unforgettable. In addition to this there was Barabbas himself, a living witness to the event; always ready to tell the tale how Jesus was delivered up to the will of His enemies to be crucified, and he himself set free.

b. 3.

THE DEATH-JOURNEY

xxiii. 26-32. On the road to Calvary.

That it was the Prisoner, condemned to death in Pilate's judgment-hall, Who suffered upon Calvary, was vouched for by those who followed Him step by step from the hall to the cross.

As the soldiers were leading Him away, the procession had to stop for His cross to be laid on the shoulders of a passer-by who chanced to be coming in from the country. So good a view did this man have as he walked close behind Jesus carrying His cross, that the evangelist gave his name to Theophilus as a reference. The man was Simon of Cyrene. Having to follow Jesus all the way to the very spot where He was to be crucified, he could testify that it was Jesus Himself Who was there all the time.

That Simon was following Him thus was a matter of common knowledge; for, as Theophilus was told, a great crowd of "the people" followed Jesus. Amongst those gazing on that strange sight of a condemned prisoner going to the place of execution unburdened, and followed by a free man carrying his cross for him, there may have been some who had come to Him daily in the temple, and were sorrowfully following their Teacher as He went to His death: but from the way in which they are mentioned, they were mainly drawn from the ranks of those whom Pilate had summoned, those who had joined in the cry, "Crucify, crucify Him"; people with the blood-lust still upon them, eager to feast their eyes on His agony. Whoever they were, the fact remains that Jesus was followed from the judgment-hall to Calvary by numbers who were present at His condemnation;

people who knew Him, and would be able to tell that no one changed places with Him on the way, and that Simon of Cyrene was behind Him all the time bearing His cross.

Women also were following Him, wailing and lamenting Him; moved, perhaps, by the touching sight of His weakness, when, too feeble to bear the load, He sank beneath the weight of His cross. Their testimony was an awful prophecy of woe, which chilled their hearts, and haunted them with its fears. He Who had uttered those terrible words was that Prisoner without a cross, Who walked before Simon. He had turned and bidden them, in words startling to Jewish women, not to weep for Him, but for themselves and their children: for the time would come when they would count barrenness, and not motherhood, a blessing—the time spoken of by Hosea, when judgment would fall upon those who forsook their God. Their own rulers would cause those woes; for if they did such deeds as the present one in Jerusalem flourishing, what would they not do in Jerusalem perishing. From the One without the cross that dreadful prophecy came; the One known to all as Jesus of Nazareth.

Two other prisoners joined Him Who had thus been identified; and the procession went on its way.

#### b. 4.

#### THE CRUCIFIXION

xxiii. 33-43. The identification upon the cross.

Not a word of horror, grief, or sympathy is to be found in the account of the crucifixion; nothing but a cold, bare recital of facts such as would be given when an outline of evidence is being made. The exact spot is mentioned,—the place called The Skull, rising ground upon which the crosses could be seen from afar; the fact that they crucified Him; the arrangement of the crosses; and the division of His raiment, which would only have taken place when the officer in charge had satisfied himself that all the details of the execution had been properly carried out, and

the soldiers had nothing to do but to watch. Short as the account is, there was enough in it to remind Theophilus of what Jesus had said, that "all things that are written by the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of man"; for the statement about the placing of His cross between those of the two malefactors plainly applied to His being numbered amongst the transgressors; and that about the parting of His garments amongst them, casting lots, to the prophecy in the Psalms.

The iron discipline of the Roman army was so well known that, in a case like this where all the prisoners had been safely brought through the narrow streets to the place of execution, there was no need for any proof to be given that all were duly crucified, Jesus as well as the two malefactors. But for all that, the evangelist still followed his practice of giving references; making it thereby doubly sure that not only was Jesus one of the three, but that it was He Who hung there from that middle cross.

"The people stood beholding"—the great multitude that had followed Him all the way to Calvary to see the death of Him Whom Pilate had tried in vain to save. What took place was done openly, and all who wished could see: so the evangelist has treated those onlookers as if they were a band of witnesses standing there and beholding the things related, able to give clear evidence about them all. What they saw and heard being still things of public interest and common talk when this treatise was written, confirmation of what is recorded would have been easy to get.

They could have had no doubt whatever about which of the three was Jesus; for as they gazed at the crosses they heard men scoffing; and the scoffers were their own rulers, bitter foes of Jesus, His accusers who had charged Him before Pilate. It was at Him Who hung in the midst that they heard them jeer; scoffing at Him as the Christ of God, the Chosen One, the Saviour Who could not save Himself: and they knew that the object of such scorn could only be Jesus.

Then they saw the soldiers, who had never lost sight of Him, go and mock this One as the King of the Jews; offering Him vinegar, and deriding His helplessness. And over the head of Him Whom they mocked was the official declaration, "This is the King of the Jews."

Lastly when the venom and abuse around them had ceased through palling, they heard the two who were hanging on the outside crosses address Him, Who hung between them, as Jesus the Christ. One, in his agony, railed at Him and His claim to be the Christ: but the other, replying, clearly distinguished between themselves and the One Who had done nothing amiss; and, calling Him by name, made a strange request: "Jesus, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." The faith was marvellous, and the answer wonderful. "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Paradise was the name given in their Scriptures to the garden which God had planted in Eden, the abode of bliss where He placed the man whom He had formed. To the poor sufferer, aching, throbbing, parched with thirst, that answer brought assurance of rest in the abode of the blest; rest, sweet and refreshing, in company with Jesus. To the listeners, it brought home the fact that He, Who hung there dying upon that middle cross, was the same Who had been condemned by the chief priests for declaring Himself to be the Son of God; and that He still upheld His claim to sit at the right of the power of God; and was exercising His power, even there upon the cross, by placing in Paradise the man whom He had transformed.

For all these identifications "the people" could vouch.

## b. 5.

## THE DEATH OF JESUS

## xxiii. 44-49. The dying hours.

From the way in which the evangelist has begun this short account of Jesus' dying hours, it would seem to have been about noon that the Victim's strength began plainly to fail, and signs of approaching death first showed themselves.

When a death took place, the household to which the person belonged gave public expression to their grief by such acts as the covering of the face, or the rending of a garment; and where no such signs of grief were shown, the natural conclusion in that age would have been that it was not to that household that the dead belonged. So we find that the evangelist, in telling Theophilus about the signs of grief which accompanied the death of Jesus, has recorded such as were in keeping with His being the Son of God.

He told him of two things; both of which could have been easily verified. One was the gloom that was over the whole land during those three dreadful hours; the sun's light failing, as if, in horror, it had veiled its face from the sight of its Creator's death, the Saviour crucified by those whom He had come to save. The other, which took place in His Father's house, proclaimed, after the Jewish fashion, the deepest grief. The veil of the sanctuary, the covering of the place where God especially abode, was rent in twain; as if to show the Father's bitter grief at the death of His Son.

It was the ninth hour, the hour when the killing of the paschal lambs began, that over Calvary a strange, great cry rang out, drawing every eye to Him Who was hanging there crucified because He had claimed to be the Son of God. He was dying: and in the hush that followed, they could clearly hear His dying words. Still holding to His claim, He was addressing God as His Father. "Father," He said, "into



Thy hands I commend My spirit." And having said that, He died.

The account is very brief; for the evangelist's aim was not to describe the death of Jesus, but to assure Theophilus of it: so he went on at once to tell him about those who were there, and saw and heard everything.

The best witness would of course, have been the centurion who was in charge of the execution, and who would have had to send in his report. That he was there at the very time, and had taken a keen interest in Jesus' death, was well known; for the attention of all had been drawn to him by the words which he uttered, so remarkable as coming from a Roman officer about a Jew, "Certainly this was a righteous man."

Then there were the lookers-on, spoken of no longer as "the people," for their King was dead; but as "the multitudes." When they beheld the things that were done, and saw that Jesus was dead, they all trooped away like people when a show is over: but it was not as people satisfied, but as mourners smiting their breasts that they went; so strange and sad had been the sight.

There were others, however, who did not go; people who stayed there all the time looking on: and to them especially Theophilus could go for anything he wanted to know. All Jesus' acquaintances were there, people who knew Him personally, and whose names were known; and there were also the women who followed Him from Galilee, well-known women, with some of whose names he had been furnished. These stood afar off watching all that was done on the hill of Calvary; and, when death came and the crowds left, stayed on; for the body of Jesus still hung on the cross.

## b. 6.

## THE BURIAL

## xxiii. 50-56. The burial of Jesus.

The next thing which the evangelist had to do was to trace the body of Jesus to the tomb; and for this, he gave Theophilus the name and address of the man who buried Him. The man was Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin; and his address was Arimathæa, a city of the Jews. He was one upon whose word Theophilus could depend; for he was a good man and righteous: a statement which called for the explanation, that he had taken no part in what the Sanhedrin had planned and done to Jesus. Like Simeon and Anna, he was looking for the kingdom of God; and was therefore one of those whose hopes for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel were blasted by Jesus' death. He it was who took down the body of Jesus from the cross, and buried it; sure that it was Jesus Himself, and that every trace of life had gone.

It was not the fact, however, that Jesus was buried by His friends that made His burial the final proof that, when He came into their hands, not a single spark of life was left; but Pilate's burial-permit which Joseph had first to get. What that meant was so well known, that there was no need for the evangelist to do anything more than to say that Joseph went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate, of course, had to trust to the report of the centurion who was in charge of the crucifixion; but when an officer like that certified to a death, that death was a certainty. The discipline of the Roman army at that time was very strict. When a man was given into the soldiers' charge to be crucified, they were responsible for him until he was dead; and their lives were staked upon the truth of their evidence that he was dead. If they had reported him as being dead, and he were afterwards found to be alive, their own lives would have paid the forfeit; for it would have been an

avoidable escape of a prisoner. Such men took no chances. When death seemed to have come, their ways were not the ways of physicians, but of executioners: for their aim was not to see if the man were alive, but to make sure that he was dead. It was more than their business; it was their duty. As practical men, engaged in an oft-repeated duty, all would have been reduced to a system, and no loop-hole for error left. In those days there was no squeamishness in dealing with a human body. Soldiers in charge of an execution would not have risked their lives by feeling the pulse, or examining the eye, to make sure of the death of the crucified, when a slash of the throat, or a stab in some vital part, would have taken away all doubt. According to a man who was there at the time, it was by the latter method that those in charge of Jesus assured themselves of His death. They knew well enough that He was dead; but for all that, as He hung above them on the cross, one of them thrust a spear upwards into His side, into the cavity of the heart, and by the outpour of blood and water they were sure that they had safeguarded themselves. Those to whom the evangelist was writing were so familiar with the routine of Roman executions, that to enter into such details would have been a waste of words; for, to them, all was covered by the fact that Pilate's burial-permit had been given.

The place of burial was a tomb hewn out of the rock; the only way of entering, or leaving it being through the single opening, or doorway. It was a new tomb; and till then unused: so that the body of Jesus, wrapped in linen, was the only body there.

The time of the burial was the close of the day of the Preparation, just before the sabbath began. By mentioning this the evangelist explained why the full burial rites were not carried out; and also fixed the time for reckoning the fulfilment of Jesus' words, that on the third day He would rise again.

The other references, besides Joseph, that he gave for the

burial of Jesus were the Deaconesses; the women who had come with Jesus from Galilee. Everything was done openly; and all who cared to do so could see the body taken down from the cross, wrapped up, and buried; so those women, who had been watching the corpse all the time, followed it to the tomb itself, and saw it laid therein. Leaving it there alone in the rock-hewn tomb, they went away to the city, sure of His death, and prepared spices and ointments for completing the burial.

b. 7.

THE EMPTY TOMB.

xxiii. 56.-xxiv. 12. The women at the tomb.

From now onward the chapter has to do with that part of the introduction, "From henceforth shall the Son of man be seated at the right hand of the power of God. And they all said, Art Thou then the Son of God? And He said unto them, Ye say that I am."

From the very beginning of His coming, His divine nature had been proclaimed more or less plainly by words; but now it was proclaimed with clearness by a work of power which no mere man could do. So incredible a deed was it, that the evangelist has chosen it, from all that Jesus did, to be the great test miracle. The same three conditions marked it, which marked the others; but in this case the word of Jesus necessarily came first, for the state before the miracle was that of a dead man, when all the powers of the human body have ceased to act. What He had said was that, not only would He rise again, but that it would be on the third day that He would do it; and it was because of the time being thus fixed, that the evangelist, out of all the evidence at his disposal, confined himself to that which showed that on the third day Jesus was alive. He began with the disappearance of the body from the tomb.

It was because of the sabbath that the women, who were present at His death and burial, waited until the third day

before going on with their task; but, as soon as they could see, they went to the tomb to finish the funeral rites. All that they did, the trouble and expense to which they went in preparing spices and ointment, and carrying them all the way to the tomb, and their getting there so early in the morning, make it plain that they were sure of finding everything as they had left it, and the corpse still within. But when they came, they saw that the stone which had closed the tomb had been rolled away; and, on going in, they found that the body was not there. The tomb was empty.

The empty tomb was but a link in the chain of evidence; and, of course, was offered to Theophilus neither as a proof of a resurrection, nor even as suggesting the idea of one. He was simply told the fact, that those women, who, barely forty hours before, had seen the dead body of Jesus buried there, found the tomb open, and the body gone. This fact had to be accounted for; as well as how it came to pass that such a strange explanation as a resurrection of the dead was given for it.

The explanation did not begin with the woman. The death of Jesus had been made too sure for them to entertain so wild a hope as that of His being still alive. What reasons they gave one another, in their perplexity, for the disappearance of the body the evangelist does not say; but he has depicted them as ordinary human beings to whom it would be an unthought of thing that the dead had come to life. In spite of having heard Jesus Himself foretell it, they failed to see any connection between a resurrection and that empty tomb. It had to be announced, as His marvellous first coming had been, by beings from the unseen world.

Two men in dazzling apparel stood by them, before whom they bowed to the earth in fear. Those men spoke of Jesus as if He were alive;—Why seek ye amongst the dead Him that liveth?—and reminded them of what He had said to them in Galilee about being delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and being crucified, and the third day rising

again. Their words, however, seem to have had no weight at all with the women until they remembered what Jesus had said; and then, knowing that of those three strange statements the first two had come true—that He had been delivered up, and had also been crucified—the hope arose that what those heavenly messengers had said might also be true, and that He had arisen, as He said He would, upon that third day.

The references given to Theophilus for all this were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; with the accompanying information that they had returned from the tomb and told the news, not only to the eleven, but to all the rest: that is, to all the rest of whose Ordination he had been told. Seeing that the only Helpers of whom he had been told were the twelve themselves, "all the rest" would have been the rest of the seventy, the "others" who, with the twelve, began the order of Spokesmen.

A further note, that "the other women with them told these things to the apostles," reminded Theophilus that it was about the preparation and ordination of the apostles as Envoys that he was being specially told in this part of the treatise; and also pointed out to him the plan which the evangelist was following with regard to the evidence for the resurrection. He was treating the apostles, the great witnesses to whom Theophilus, or any one else at that time, could have gone for the details, as if they were a jury to whom all the evidence was being brought, and he were tracing their gradual conviction.

The reception of the women's report was far from encouraging. No one believed them. Their explanation of the empty tomb may have sounded plausible enough at the sepulchre, when given by those strangers in dazzling raiment; but in a house, amongst everyday surroundings, and calmly judged by the light of reason and experience, it sounded like so much nonsense. Notwithstanding all that Jesus had done to prepare the apostles for the event, they

were so sure of His death, and of the impossibility of a dead person coming to life again, that they scouted the idea that He was alive. Instead of being ready to welcome the suggestion, they were strongly biassed against it. The empty tomb, they had to accept as a fact; but the explanation, that He had risen from the dead, they utterly rejected; treating the women's words as idle tales.

## b. 8.

### THE RECOGNITION

#### xxiv. 13-35. The walk to Emmaus.

The next reports, which came to the apostles and those with them, were brought by some of their own number; Cleopas and his companion, and Peter. Like themselves, those witnesses had believed that Jesus could not possibly be alive; but now they came declaring that they had seen Him.

The value of such evidence is much affected by the degree of readiness with which the witnesses had changed their minds; so the evangelist set before Theophilus the facts by which they were influenced, and showed him how slowly they were made to believe that it was Jesus Himself Whom they saw and heard. The account is built up of short extracts; each of which has its share in showing how men, who firmly believed in the death of Jesus, were at last brought to believe that they saw Him alive.

The day, when the things narrated took place, was that same first day of the week, the third day after the death of Jesus; and the time, the afternoon. The place where they met Him was the public highway; but the full recognition was at Emmaus. Those who saw Jesus were two of "the rest" of His pupils, members of the seventy. They were going along the road talking about all that had happened, when Jesus Himself overtook them, and walked with them—and they did not know Him. To them He was merely some troublesome stranger who had forced himself upon them;

for "their eyes were holden that they should not know Him."

There is no need for imagining that it was by some unwonted influence that they were kept from recognizing Him Whom they had known so well. It was only the day but one before, that they had seen Him, with nails driven through His feet, hanging upon the cross for hours, and then dying in agony through sheer weakness: and this man had overtaken them on the hot, dusty road, and was keeping pace with them. However striking the resemblance may have been, the whole experience of their lives was against their thinking that that active, living man and the mangled dead were the same. But whatever the cause may have been, in spite of the fact that at the very time He joined them their minds were dwelling upon Him, the likeness in itself was not enough to make them take the Newcomer for Jesus.

But what when they heard His voice? When He broke in upon their conversation, so far were they from recognizing the voice, that they both stopped short at His question, looking angry. The Stranger was meddlesome; and Cleopas grew sarcastic. "Dost thou sojourn alone in Jerusalem, and knowest thou not the things that have come to pass there in these days?" It would be hard to find a stronger proof of total non-recognition than such treatment of Jesus by one of His pupils.

The remark of Cleopas was passed over unnoticed, except that it was made the ground for the next question, "What things?" This was not asked of the last speaker only, but of both of them; and the answer given is not a single reply, but a digest of the conversation which was then carried on amongst them. It forms a series getting less and less general, and entering ever deeper into the sorrows and hopes of the two disciples; showing plainly how steadily their good-will and trustfulness kept growing under the Stranger's softening influence. Their first reply was short and abrupt: "About Jesus of Nazareth." Then, evidently in answer to another question, they explained who



He was as known to the public. It was when they began to tell of what happened to Him, and separated themselves from those who put Him to death, that the door was opened for more personal questions, and they were led on to give their own private hopes that He would have been the Messiah. Their trustfulness reached its height when they told of the strange things which had taken place that very day; and how amazed they had been at the women's report. They even confessed that some of them went to the tomb on the strength of what those women had said, but that "Him they found not"; as if their expectation had been that, if there were any truth in it, they would have found Him lingering somewhere in the neighborhood, helpless, crippled, exhausted.

By this summary of their answers Theophilus was shown what they had learned so far to believe about Jesus; and what the farthest limit was to which they could force themselves to go in accepting the story of the women: also that the sole effect upon them of the voice and look of Jesus was their gradual change from sullenness to friendliness.

The next thing was how far they were influenced by the prophecies which had been handed down about the Christ: such, for instance, as that of Isaiah 53:12 where the victorious Servant of God divides the spoil with the strong, because He had poured out His soul unto death; a prophecy which, for its fulfilment, required a return to life. About the effect that the Scriptures had had upon them, the Stranger used plain, and unflattering words. They were foolish men; slow of heart in believing all that the prophets had said; unable to grasp the fact that the Christ had to suffer the things they had just been talking about, and to enter into His glory. So far from the Scriptures having predisposed them to think that it was possible for Him to rise again, not even when explained by Jesus Himself did they enable those men to accept what was there before their very eyes—the fact that He was alive. Their hearts indeed began

to burn within them, and perchance wild hopes began to arise; but neither His voice, nor appearance, neither His way of unfolding the Scriptures, nor the light which He gave, had been able to bridge the gulf between the present and the past, and make them recognize their risen Lord.

Their change of feeling towards the Stranger, however, became very marked; and when they came to their journey's end, instead of letting Him go on His way, they insisted upon His stopping there with them. But it was only when He was at the table with them, and, in a way peculiar to Himself, took bread, gave thanks, brake it and gave it to them, that the link was supplied. Then in a flash all that they had seen, heard, and learned that day fitted in with the past; and they knew Him.

How long it was before He left them, the evangelist does not say; but merely records the strange way in which He went: that He vanished out of their sight.

Without any delay they hastened back to the eleven and those of the seventy who were there with them, and told them all that had happened.

Whether the unnamed traveller to Emmaus was dead or not at the time the treatise was written, we are not told; but the only one of the pair given as a reference was Cleopas, the man who had sneered at Jesus. It was too important a piece of evidence, however, for only one reference to be given Theophilus for testing it; so the evangelist added the name of Simon, who had been in just the same stage of knowledge and perplexity as Cleopas and his companion, and, like them, had seen and recognized Jesus.

The conclusion to which the eleven and those with them had come after hearing Peter's report—a conclusion which was evidently confirmed by the news brought by the two from Emmaus—was that Jesus had awakened. The verb they used was the same as that which the Jews had used about John the Baptist whose head had been cut off and given away; and shows that they looked on the appearance

as one of those cases when, according to popular notion, the ghosts of the dead revisit the earth.

b. 9.

THE RISEN BODY

xxiv. 36-43. The appearance in the room.

Both Spokesmen and Envoys were there, but it was upon the Envoys that the eyes of Theophilus were fixed; not only because it was about them and their training that he was being assured, but because they were the references specially given him for the truth of what he was being told. The selections, which the evangelist made for him from what took place in the room, met doubts and difficulties such as would beset an inquirer seeking to know the certainty of the resurrection.

The two from Emmaus were still telling them what had happened, when Jesus Himself stood in the midst. What had just been said about the way in which He had vanished at Emmaus had evidently made them think that what the two had seen was His disembodied spirit, which had returned in the likeness of the body in which it used to dwell; for, when He appeared so suddenly amongst them, they were terrified and affrighted, thinking that it was a spirit. Then as He stood there speaking to them, and asking them why they were afraid, an explanation suggested itself to them—that it was some one strongly resembling Him who had come into the room, and not the crucified One Himself. Both of those theories Jesus swept away.

Dealing with the second one first, He told them to look at His hands and feet; at those strangely shaped holes, marks of a recent crucifixion, which could neither be imitated nor mistaken: to look, and be sure that it was He Himself Who stood there amongst them; the Jesus Whom they had known, and had seen crucified and buried.

Convinced of His identity, they fell back upon the spiritual resurrection theory. Indeed, at that stage they could

not have said positively that it was not an apparition after all that they were beholding; and to regard it as such would have seemed something less wild than to imagine it to be the body which had been buried. That theory Jesus met by telling them to handle Him and see: to feel His flesh and His bones; and to look into the gaping wound in His side, into His body itself: for a spirit had not flesh and bones, as they could see that He had. Having handled and seen, they could not deny that it was a real, living body that was in their midst; the body of Jesus Himself.

Besides telling Theophilus all this, the evangelist told him also of a confirming proof which Jesus gave them. Strange to say, in spite of such evidence of their senses, there was still another hindrance to be overcome before they could calmly and surely believe that He had risen from the dead. After all that they had gone through, the death of their Leader so greatly beloved, and the downfall of their hopes, it seemed too good to be true that He was there, before them, alive: the idea too was still strange to them; and they could only gaze at Him, and wonder. So He gave them a very plain proof of His bodily reality by making them bring Him food; and then, taking the piece of broiled fish which they brought Him, He ate it there before their eyes.

Thus all through the account it was made clear to Theophilus that the apostles and their companions found as great difficulty in believing that Jesus had risen from the dead as it was possible for men to do: also that the very idea of such a resurrection was to them something strange and unnatural, unfit for men of intelligence to entertain; and that it was only after having been driven from one stand to another, that they were at last forced to admit that the dead body of Jesus had indeed come to life again.

## b. 10.

## THE SON OF GOD

## xxiv. 44-49. The fulfilment of the Scriptures.

In the next scene which the evangelist set before Theophilus, the scene which forms the climax of the treatise, Jesus was once more training His Envoy-pupils; but no longer as the Son of man in His humility. When He spoke of that part of His earthly career, it was as of another state of being; referring to the things He had told them as having been said whilst He was still with them, as if He were one whose mortal life had ended. For it was as the risen Lord, as He Who was dead and is alive for evermore, of Whose kingdom there is no end, that Theophilus was being shown Him there amongst them; and the eleven themselves, as no longer regarding Him as a mortal man, but as One more than human; One Who knew all things, and ruled all things; Who by His resurrection had been declared to be that for which He had been condemned to death for proclaiming, the Son of God.

Of all that took place during the forty days that He was with them, he was only told enough to show him that Jesus, as the Son of God, completed and confirmed what He had said and done as the Son of man.

First, he was told that Jesus confirmed what He had said as the Son of man about the Scriptures; that all that had been written about Him in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms had to be fulfilled: and that He showed that it was according to His own word, as well as according to the Scriptures, that all had taken place. Nothing in His ministry had happened by chance, or been done blindly, as by a man groping his way to achievement. Every part of it was according to a plan laid down long before; and had taken place just as it had been decreed: for that plan was the plan of God. What believers, and also unbelievers, had done in connection with the life-work of the Christ was

what had been allotted them to do; and what Jesus Himself had done was, step by step, what it had been foretold He would do.

That is why the portrait of the Christ, made up of His life and doings as described in the Scriptures, had been given such an important place in the training of Theophilus; for with that portrait all that Jesus was and did had to agree. Some parts of it were hard to make out; and he had to be sure that it was with a full knowledge, and clear understanding of what they were saying that his instructors had explained and applied them. So he was next shown Jesus, as the Son of God, opening their minds to understand the Scriptures, and pointing out their application to the doings of His ministry.

No human eye had seen Him rise from the dead. All that the witnesses mentioned could prove was, that on the third day He was living again. There was only one who could give firsthand evidence that it was upon that very day itself that He had risen from the dead, and that was Jesus Himself: and this evidence He gave when, speaking as the Son of God, He assured them of the things in the Scriptures concerning Himself; and instanced, not only His sufferings, but also His resurrection upon the third day. The part of the Scripture to which He referred was Hosea 6:1-3 (Sep. Ver.). "He has torn and will heal us; He will smite and bind us up. After two days He will make us whole; on the third day we shall arise and live before Him." The prophet, in describing God's way with those who had sinned, was also describing His way with Him upon Whom all sins were laid:—the sufferings of the Christ, and His resurrection.

Next came the things concerning the kingdom which shall have no end, about which Theophilus had been so carefully instructed; namely, the ministry of the Church. Not that the orders are mentioned by name: for, as it has been said, it was not of their names that Theophilus wanted to know the certainty. The ministry was created for work

Christ wanted done; and by its distinctive work each order could be known: Helpers, by the preaching of repentance; and the Spokesmen, by the remission of sins in Christ's name. About those two orders, their founding by Jesus of Nazareth, their qualifications and duties, their place in the Church, and their Ordinations, Theophilus had been fully told: what he was now being assured of was that all of it was according to the plan of God laid down in the Scriptures; that what Jesus had done as the Son of man, He confirmed as the Son of God; and that He made the range of their work, not merely the cities and villages of Palestine, but all nations upon earth, so that all flesh should see the salvation of God.

Then the evangelist went on to complete His account of the founding of the Envoys. Like as villages had been chosen for the beginning of the work of the lowest order, and cities for that of the second, so the capital city, Jerusalem, was made the starting-point of the highest. Beginning from Jerusalem, they were to be witnesses—witnesses of the God-given messages in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms; and especially those parts of their fulfilment, crowned by the resurrection, about which the evangelist had just told Theophilus: witnesses, not only by their teaching, but by their very existence as an order. Speaking on the authority of the Son of God Himself, they were to testify to people that He died for their sins according to the Scripture, and that, according to the Scripture, He also rose again the third day: in other words, they were to testify to Him as our Saviour and our God. Moreover on the same authority, they were also to be witnesses that the distinctive work of the two lower orders, the preaching of repentance and of the remission of sins, was God-given.

Then came the assurance of what Theophilus had been taught about that which none could do without the direct consent and help of God, and none would dare to profess to do without the assured commission of God—the outpour-

ing of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation and Ordinations. Speaking still as the Son of God, and speaking as doing it Himself, and at that very time, Jesus declared that He sent forth upon those representatives of the highest order the promise of the Father. The Father's promise was to pour out the Holy Spirit as foretold in Joel 2: 28; 29. Two outpourings were promised: one which all people could receive; the other, God's servants, male and female. That promise, in both its parts, the Son of God committed to His Envoys to fulfil.

The enquiries of Theophilus into the duties of the Envoys, their position, authority, and work were almost ended. He had been shown how Jesus, as the departing Christ, committed to them the feeding of His people, the ruling of His kingdom, the care and defence of the poor and the weak; and, as the Son of God, made them His witnesses, and the custodians of the Father's promise: but he had not yet been assured of their power to do it all.

It was in the power of the Spirit that Jesus had returned from the wilderness to begin His work as the Christ. By that power it was done by Him; and without that power none can carry it on for Him. That is why Theophilus, after having been assured about the commission of the Envoys, had to be assured as well that the power of the Spirit was also given them. This the evangelist did by quoting the words of Jesus. They were to remain in the city until they were "clothed with power from on high."

That outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon them took place on the day of Pentecost. On that day the promise of the Father was fulfilled for them, and they became able to fulfil it for others in obedience to their commission. But until they had been clothed with that power, they were to attempt nothing; for until they had received it, they could not do the Envoys' work, not having been fully ordained. Its down-coming was to be the completion of their consecration.



## C.

## THE UNCEASING BLESSING

## xxiv. 50-53. The Ascension.

The task outlined by the evangelist at the beginning of the treatise was accomplished; and Theophilus knew the certainty of the things in which he had been instructed—the three orders of the ministry, their position, powers, and duties. All had been shown to be the creation of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God; the proof of Whose divinity had begun with His conception by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and closed with the great witness of His resurrection. It was as the Prophet like unto Moses that He had founded those orders; and, true to the very last to the plan of God, He was still filling in that likeness when He passed away from the earth in the scene with which the evangelist has closed the treatise—a departure miraculous, even as His coming had been.

Once more he turned the eyes of Theophilus to Him Whose nature, teaching, and doings he had been so carefully unfolding; and showed him Jesus leading His Envoys out until they were over against Bethany, the spot where they had first openly acknowledged Him as their King. There He lifted up His hands, and blessed them; closing His work on earth as Moses, the man of God, had closed his by giving his blessing to those whom he was leading.

That blessing of Jesus was not only upon the Envoys themselves, but upon all their work for Him; from its humble beginning in fetching the colt, to its high glory in bestowing the promise of the Father: and through them, upon all His people who serve Him.

“Whilst He was blessing them, He parted from them.” Not that the giving of the blessing ceased. It was not even interrupted; but still went on as He ascended: and still goes on; coming now from heaven itself, where the Son of man sits at the right hand of the power of God, and is

poured out upon His people through His Envoys. The giving of that blessing by His Envoys is thus an unceasing reminder of the Ascension.

That was the last of the things about which Theophilus had to be assured. What follows closes this marvellous treatise by linking the departure of the Son of God with His first coming. A few strokes more of the pen, and Theophilus was shown the Envoys returning to Jerusalem in obedience to His command, filled with great joy: the great joy of which the herald angel had spoken; the joy which comes from knowing Christ the Lord, and being His servants, blessed by Him. And he was shown them also in the temple blessing God, like Simeon the servant of God: for they too had seen the Lord's Christ, and were chosen witnesses to testify that He, the risen Son of man, is the Son of God, the Saviour Who brings the salvation of God which all flesh shall see.



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